

79/compatible. But not all Coorgs have horoscopes, and marriages
787 are frequently arranged without resorting to the Kaniya astrologer.

Coorgs formerly resorted to the Kaniya on every conceivable occasion. If an ox strayed, or if someone was ill in the house, the Kaniya was consulted. It was believed that he was able to tell, by consulting the planets, whether the strayed ox would return and whether the patient would recover. Sometimes he suggested the performance of some rite which would enable, for instance, the ox which had strayed to return home and the patient to recover. Perhaps a minor deity or spirit like Gulika, or an ancestral spirit, was annoyed because it had not received the necessary attention from the members of the particular joint family. The Kaniya would then suggest the performance of appropriate propitiatory ritual.

792 The Ban̄ṇa and Paṇika are two low castes, originally from
[544] Malabar, who are very similar to each other and who actually perform the ritual which the Kaniya prescribes for his Coorg client. These two castes stand in a relation similar to the one in which the dispensing chemist stands to the doctor in the Western world. The Kaniya says, for instance, that the ancestors of his client are angry because they have not been propitiated for a long time, and he suggests the performance of the *kāraṇava téré* which is an elaborate propitiation of ancestors lasting over a day. The Ban̄ṇa (or Paṇika) actually performs the elaborate ancestor-propitiation at which the ancestors of the Coorg joint family possess the Ban̄ṇa oracle.¹

Each Ban̄ṇa family serves a group of villages which they are under an obligation to serve. Besides ancestor-propitiation and other occasions when their services are wanted by families, Ban̄ṇas play very important parts at the festivals of village-deities where they are oracles, dancers, and cutters of the sacrificial animals.

322 Coorgs come into contact with the blacksmith, carpenter, and
325 goldsmith usually in non-ritual contexts. The blacksmith and
328 carpenter make the agricultural implements and domestic articles, and also help in building the massive houses of Coorgs. Some of the articles made by them, like the bier and palanquin, are used on ritual occasions.

328 The goldsmith, in addition to making the gold and silver orna-

304 ¹ Richter's *Manual of Coorg*, pp. 169-70, contains an example of the kind of service which the Kaniya performed with the aid of the Ban̄ṇa.

THE RITUAL COMPLEX OF MANGALA

79

V

It is not only places which have ritual value, but also points of 823 the compass. East is a sacred direction because the sun rises there, 776 and Hindus in all parts of India regard the sun as a deity.

The ancestral house faces east and so does the ancestor-shrine. [342] The lip of the sacred wall-lamp in the central hall faces east. The subject of a *mangala* ceremony sits facing east.

On getting up from his bed in the morning a Coorg salutes the [282] wall-lamp and the sun. The cultivation of rice is accompanied by [243] ritual at every stage, and on all these ritual occasions the subject of the rites begins by saluting the sun.

South is an inauspicious or bad-sacred direction. A corpse is [764] buried or cremated with its head towards south. In Sanskritic Hinduism, south is the abode of Yama, the god of death.

Coorgs, like Hindus in other parts of India, regard east as a good-sacred direction and south as a bad-sacred direction. East is associated with Chūriya (sun-god), and south with Yama. Both these deities have an All-India spread. Coorgs worship these two deities along with other Hindus all over India. The possession of [184] common values binds people together and Coorgs form a single community with Hindus all over India when they worship the same deities.

VI

Mūrta is the crucial part of *mangala*, and the rites performed 796 prior to *mūrta* prepare the subject for it. The subject is shaved by 305 the barber, given a bath by three married women, and dressed in 292 ritual robes and ornaments before sitting down to *mūrta*. Shaving, the first of several preparatory rites, will be briefly considered here.

It is necessary to repeat here that shaving is done by barbers [384] who form a caste. Contact with the barber defiles a member of a [283] higher caste, and consequently shaving is invariably followed by a purificatory bath.

The subject of *mangala* wears a white cotton *kupya* while he is being shaved by the barber. The *kupya* is like a dressing-gown, and it is either black or white. The white gown is of cotton, has long sleeves, and covers the neck up to the throat. This is the traditional ritual dress of Coorgs. The black gown is a Westernized version of

765 mourners are required to perform certain rites while their clothes
783 are wet and dripping.

On the twelfth or sixteenth day of the death of a person the ceremony of *māda* is performed and this puts an end to ritual mourning for all except the first-grade mourners. Until the performance of *māda*, the mourners offer food every day to the spirit of the dead person. When making these offerings they are required frequently to take a plunge in a well or pond with their clothes on. But this is not a pleasant thing to do, and especially so in the wet and cold seasons, and consequently, after the first plunge for the day, the mourners content themselves by washing their hands and feet, and wetting a corner of their waist-cloths. This is regarded as sufficient to meet the ends of ritual purity. Such a traditionally sanctioned mechanism makes ritual simpler and less inconvenient to the persons concerned.

The widower (or widow) and eldest son go, after the mourning period is over, to Bhāgamāṇḍla where the rivers Kāvēri and Kanaké meet. After a shave, they bathe in the confluence of the two rivers, and then offer balls of rice-flour to the dead person's spirit. This is followed by a visit to the temple of Bhagandēshwara [778] where the mourners offer worship. Subsequently they go to the source of the River Kāvēri, bathe in the larger spring, worship the smaller spring, and then return home.

783 Two ideas can be distinguished in the above ritual acts: (1) a ritual bath alters the ritual status of the subject; and (2) bathing in a sacred river is not only purifying in a ritual sense, but also
184 removes the sins of the bather. This latter idea is shared by Hindus all over India, and when a Coorg bathes in the Kāvēri he participates in a ritual idiom that spreads all over India. The Kāvēri is a sacred river for Hindus in every part of south India, and it is even called the '*dakṣiṇa ganga*' or the Southern Ganges. Bathing in the Ganges, or in any other sacred river, rids a person of the sins he
● [782] has committed both in this and in a previous existence. It confers on him spiritual merit (*punya*).

[779] Sanskritic Hinduism has incorporated into itself the idea that bathing changes the ritual status of the bather, and has elaborated it in such a manner that pious Hindus believe in the sin-cleansing and merit-conferring powers of sacred rivers.

876 On the seventh or twelfth day after the birth of a child in a Coorg house, the washerman comes with a vessel full of water in which

589 widows and divorcées have a slightly higher status than widows, but this does not entitle them to be classed as *garatis*.

589 The Coorg widow's dress consists of a white cotton *sari*, a white
292 cotton blouse, and a white cotton scarf. None of these clothes may
[764] have a coloured border. The corpse of a widow, too, is dressed in clothes without a coloured border. The corpse of a married woman, on the other hand, is dressed in a coloured *sari* with a coloured, or silver, or gold, border.

[171] The distinction between a widow and married woman is absolutely fundamental in every part of south India. Married women have a great number of privileges, whereas widows have a great number of ritual disabilities. A married woman is auspicious, she is everywhere welcome, whereas a widow is inauspicious, and she is unwelcome everywhere. This deep cleavage expresses itself in the matter of dress also.

IX

● 782 After being dressed in ritual robes, the subject of *mangala*
778 salutes the various lamps in the house before sitting down for
354 *mūrta*. On either side of him is a dish-lamp placed on a tripod stool. The dish-lamp is indispensable on every ritual occasion.

Every day, early in the morning and again just before nightfall, the housewife sweeps the house and sprinkles it with a purifying solution of cow-dung. She then lights the wall-lamp and salutes it. While saluting it she prays to the ancestors of the *okka*, to Mother Kāvēri and Shiva. Every member of the *okka* salutes the wall-lamp after getting up in the morning, and again at night.

[821] The ending of night as well as of day is marked by sweeping and purifying the house, and by lighting and saluting the wall-lamp. The period between the ending of the day and the beginning of night is regarded as a critical time, and children are not given food or allowed to sleep at that time. This is a common south Indian custom.

[787] It is regarded as a bad omen if the lamp goes out while a Coorg is having his dinner. The sudden extinction of the lamp indicates the approach of disaster. The diner gets up from his meal, cleans the dish and washes his hands. He sits down to dinner again a few minutes later. This makes it a different meal altogether and not the one that was interrupted.

THE RITUAL COMPLEX OF MANGALA

89

A Coorg never says that a lamp has gone out. He says instead, 784
'the lamp is brighter' (*bolicha dumb pōchi*). This kind of euphemism 354
is employed on other occasions also: the Kodagi word for a tiger is
'nari' which means a jackal in every other Dravidian language.

Again, no Coorg says that 'a cobra has bitten So-and-so'. He
says instead, 'a creeper has bitten So-and-so'. Finally, after nightfall
no one mentions the barber. If they have to refer to him they say
instead, 'the scraper of heads'. Amongst the Hindus in Mysore the
barber is referred to after nightfall as 'one whose name may not be
mentioned'. A barber is inauspicious, and contact with him is [305]
defiling. He is also associated with inauspicious occasions such as
death, as mourners have to be shaved. Women specially dread the
barber, as until recently among the highest castes widows were
required to have their heads shaved entirely.

In every one of the cases we have mentioned circumlocution is
employed to avoid reference to an unpleasant object or event. The
bite of a snake is always unpleasant and frequently fatal; a barber
suggests death and widowhood; and it is much better to think of a
tiger as a jackal. The euphemistic reference to the extinction of a [596]
lamp has a similar purpose: a lamp is the symbol of the solidarity
and strength of the *okka*, and its sudden extinction refers to the
decay and extinction of the *okka*. It also refers to the withdrawal of [782] ●
the protective power of the ancestors and the deities who are
invoked while saluting a lamp.

Among the Hindus of the eastern plains it is obligatory to light a 788
lamp in the house as soon as it is dark. A house without a lamp 354
suggests that everyone is dead in the house, or that they are too
poor to light one.

The ritual attitude prevalent towards the domestic lamp is easily [171]
extended to fire generally, and to the sun. These again provide [821]
points of contact with Sanskritic or All-India Hinduism.

The kitchen stove is a convenient focus for the general ritual 372
attitude existing towards fire. The kitchen stove, like the domestic 596
lamp, stands for the unity, strength, and protective power of the
okka and this fact finds ritual expression. When a member of the [764]
okka is dead and it is decided to cremate his body, the funeral pyre
is fired with a torch lighted from embers from the kitchen stove.
The torch is made with twigs collected from the domestic burial-
ground.

The belief in the protective power of *teḷi nṛ* is again the result of 372
783

THE RITUAL IDIOM OF COORGS

764 placed in his mouth. A bachelor and a wicked man are both in a spiritually unsatisfactory condition, and it is believed that their ghosts are likely to trouble survivors. The bitter fruit is an appropriate symbol of his unsatisfactory spiritual condition, of the fact that he is a danger to the surviving relatives and others.

553 It may be recalled here that a gold coin is used in ritually feeding a child on the occasion of conferring a name on it. A gold (or silver) coin which is used in solidarity rites itself becomes a symbol of a satisfactory spiritual and ritual condition. It was seen that this happened to a much greater extent in the case of milk.

XIII

• 782 The various forms of salutation prevalent among Coorgs have already been described. It is interesting to note that there is no difference between the mode of salutation adopted towards another Coorg and that adopted towards a deity. A deity might be saluted either by bowing the head and folding the palms at the chest, or by first of all prostrating oneself completely before the image and then getting up and bowing the head and folding the palms. The former mode is adopted normally towards the wall-lamp, while the latter is adopted at a famous temple, or towards the wall-lamp on a special occasion.

[171] The Coorg form of salutation is prevalent among Hindus all over India, and it is only one of several instances where Coorgs participate in a ritual idiom common to all Hindus.

576 Salutation brings into relief a particular aspect of solidarity rites: solidarity does not necessarily mean the equality of the persons participating in the particular solidarity rite. Conversely, inequality between the participants does not denote lack of solidarity. When a young Coorg salutes his father's elder brother he is not claiming to be his uncle's equal. The very act of salutation expresses that the junior is inferior to the senior: the former's head is bent and he touches the latter's feet with both hands. The junior's hands are later carried back to his forehead.

In fact, a junior who failed to show the respect due to a senior by not saluting him would be effecting a breach in the solidarity. Hostility would be the result. Everyone would say that such a youth did not know his place, that his elders had not brought him up properly, and so on.

765 mourners attains partial freedom from mourning after he has
 783 offered rice mixed with *ghi*, curd, and plantain to the spirit of the departed person. The food is carried on a plantain leaf to the sacrificial post, where it is placed to be eaten by crows. As each of them comes into the house from the sacrificial post the family friend gives him (or her) a few betel leaves and areca-nut. The mourner chews the leaves and nut for a while, and then takes the chewed stuff out of his mouth and throws it on the roof. The chewing of the leaves and nut on the eleventh day is one of the ritual acts symbolizing the end of mourning.

On the *māda* day curried meat, rice, arrack, water, and betel leaves and areca-nut are offered to the dead person's spirit. A plantain leaf on which some curried meat and rice are heaped is placed at each of the three spots where the corpse was rested *en route* to the burial-ground. At the burial-ground itself the surviving spouse and two other mourners sprinkle water on the spot where the dead person was buried or cremated. Above the spot where the corpse's head rests are kept three leaves, each containing curried meat, and rice, and three leaf-cups (*challé*) containing arrack, water, and betel and nut respectively. Each of the mourners takes a betel leaf and nut from the leaf-cup in which they are kept, and chews them.

769 Food is offered to the dead ancestors of the *okka* at the periodical
 782 ancestor-propitiations. It is also offered to them as a body on the last days of Taurus and Cancer, and on the tenth of Libra. Besides, at every festival celebrated in the house, food is offered to the ancestors before the members of the household sit down to their meal.

The idea of offering food and drink to the dead person has a very important place in funeral ritual. The departed ancestors of the *okka* are remembered constantly, and food and drink are offered to them. They are also saluted and prayed to every day.

IX

796 A village is in a condition of ritual purity during the festival of
 783 the main deity of the village, a festival which usually lasts nine or eleven days, and sometimes even twenty-one days. No woman in her periods may stay in Bēngūr village during the festival of Kētrappa. She has to leave the village at once and may return only

593 bond. It is obvious that among Coorgs, Sanskritic Hinduism has
589 had such a strengthening effect and has contributed to sub-
ordinating the wife to her husband.

XIV

596 At any given moment of time the *okka* is made up of a group of
agnatically related males descended from a common ancestor, and
their wives and children. When the older members of the *okka* die
the younger members take their places. The dynamic element in
the *okka* consists in the younger members succeeding to the
positions left vacant by the death of the older members. The *okka*
may be looked upon as a certain configuration of persons bound
together by agnatic and affinal ties, and this configuration remains
more or less constant over a period of time. The generation-depth
of an *okka* might expand by a birth, or contract by a death, a seg-
ment may cling on or split off, but in the main there is a certain
constancy of configuration which makes it an *okka*. The members
of an *okka* come and go, but the *okka* goes on for ever. They are
like people on an escalator, those on the bottom stairs moving
gradually up to the top and finally disappearing.

An *okka* not only looks forward to the future but also stretches
back into the past. Each *okka* has a distinct tradition with which its
living members are acquainted. The 'house song' (*mané pāṭ*) sung
at the harvest festival and ancestor-propitiation enables the younger
members to learn the 'history' of the *okka*.

596 The dead ancestor of a Coorg *okka* is called *kāraṇava*. *Kāraṇa*
769 in Sanskrit means, among other things, 'the cause, instrument,
origin, principle, the cause of being, a father'.¹ All the ancestors are
not of the same rank: the founder of the *okka* has a higher status
than the others. He is called *mūla puruṣa* (original man) or *ādi*
guru (first preceptor), or *ādi kāraṇava* (first ancestor), and his
higher status is reflected in the fact that at the periodical ancestor-
propitiations a pig must be sacrificed to him, while to the other
ancestors a fowl will do.² Also the Baṇṇa oracle dons the upper
part of his *téré* equipment in the Founder's honour. For the others

¹ Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 274.

● [702] ² Pigs are also usually sacrificed to bachelor-ancestors who died a violent
death, and to elderly males who died subsequent to the performance of the
previous ancestor-propitiation. But elderly women who died after the per-
formance of the previous ancestor-propitiation are offered only fowl.

THE CULT OF THE OKKA

161

known *okkas* such as the Kolandēra, Mandēpanda, Maneyapanda, 769
and Koravanda have no ancestor-shrines. 353

Originally, odd stones embedded in earthen platforms built 184
round the trunks of trees seem to have represented the ancestors
everywhere in Coorg Proper, but later the ancestor-shrine seems
to have replaced the earthen platforms in certain houses. The richer
Coorgs then seem to have increasingly taken to such shrines:
Moegling writes, 'those who cannot afford to build a *kaimaḍa* make
a sort of mud bank for the purpose called *kōṣa* under a tree in the
fields where the family's first house stood'.¹ It is likely that the [53]
possession or lack of an ancestor-shrine soon came to indicate, in
certain areas, the economic and social position of an *okka*.

The next step in the elaboration of the *kaimaḍa*-complex was 769
the building of special shrines for ancestors who died on the battle- 778
field. Yet another step was taken when a sculptured image repre-
senting an ancestor or an ancestor's benefactor was placed in the
ancestor-shrine. For instance, the chieftain Achchu Nāyaka was
helped by the Kannada ruler of Piriyaṭṭa, Nanjunda Arasu
(c. 1670), to regain his chieftaincy. The grateful Achchu Nāyaka
built a shrine in which sculptured images of himself and his bene-
factor were placed.

In the ancestral house of the Kōdanda house in Kaḍanga Marūr
village there are two tombs built over the graves of two ancestors
who attained to very high positions in the service of the Rājas.
These tombs have been built just outside the ancestor-shrine, and
are crowned with figures of the Nandi Bull, the 'vehicle' of Shiva.
Tombs, and especially tombs crowned with figures of the Nandi
Bull, are very popular among the Lingāyaṭs of south India. Coorgs
who were in the employment of the Lingāyaṭ Rājas borrowed the
customs, manners, and ritual of their rulers.

During festivals like harvest festival, and at marriage, a little 769
meat curry and rice are offered on a plantain leaf to the ancestors. 782
A leaf-cup of arrack is also kept on the plantain leaf. The ancestors
consume the essence of the offering and thereby consecrate it. All
over Hindu India food, or any article which has been offered to
a deity, is called *prasāda*, and worshippers have to partake of the
prasāda. Food which is offered to a deity is later distributed among
the worshippers, who eat it. Where flowers which have been placed

¹ Ibid., pp. 62-68. By 'family's first house' Moegling obviously means the
ancestral house.

THE CULT OF THE OKKA

769 on the image of the deity are given to a worshipper, he or she sticks
 782 them in his hair, or keeps them in his pockets. When such flowers
 wither, they are either put in a well or pond or on a tree. They are
 not thrown where people are likely to tread on them.

[796] Quite apart from festivals and other occasions when the dishes
 cooked in the house are offered to the ancestors before the members
 themselves partake of them, there are special occasions when the
 ancestors have to be offered food and drink, and these occasions
 are the last days (*changrāṇḍi*) of the months of Taurus and Cancer,
 and the tenth of Libra.

The propitiation of ancestors with food (invariably non-vegetarian) and liquor and lights is called *kāraṇava bhāraṇi*. There is also a more elaborate propitiation of ancestors called *kāraṇava téré* or *kāraṇava kōla*, at which Baṇṇas or Paṇikas officiate as priests and oracles.

This elaborate propitiation of ancestors is prevalent everywhere except Kiggaṭṇāḍ. Also there is no uniform rule as to when the propitiation should be performed: each *okka* seems to follow a different rule in this matter. For instance, the Mātandra *okka* perform it annually in May, while the Paṭṭamāḍa *okka* perform it once every few years, while some other *okkas* perform it before a wedding in the house and still others perform it some time after the death of an elderly male. In the last case the object of the propitiation is to convert the spirit of the dead person into a *kāraṇava*. An old saw has it, 'The eleventh should be added to the group of ten'.

The propitiation is invariably performed at the ancestral house. The latter is whitewashed, colour-washed, and the floors washed with a solution of cow-dung. Nowadays the head of that branch of the *okka* which is resident in the ancestral house writes a letter to the heads of the branches living elsewhere, and to other relatives, informing them of the date of the propitiation. On the appointed day they all gather together at the ancestral house, bringing with
 [525] them their votive offerings of fowl or pig or both. A daughter of the house who has married out might bring with her a votive animal to a *kāraṇava* of her natal *okka*.

The propitiation begins after sundown. Everyone takes a bath, and the head of the house dresses himself in a waist-cloth and
 769 shoulder-cloth. If he is very pious he even observes a fast.

782 The Baṇṇas perform the propitiatory ritual in the central hall of
 787 the ancestral house. One of the Baṇṇas acts as oracle (*tiruvāḷkāra*

THE CULT OF THE OKKA

163

or *boilchapād*) while another, or two others, beat drums and sing the house song of the propitiating *okka*. The song gives us an account of the life of each ancestor and ancestress. The oracle wears an elaborate equipment called *téré* which consists of two bamboo frames covered with red cloths. One of the two frames covers the lower part of the oracle's body, and the other, the upper part. The lower part is really like a skirt, while the upper part, which is flat and tapers towards the top, is tied to the back by means of a stout cord going round the waist. The *téré* is decorated with tufts and frills of the pith of *pāmbalé*.

The Baṇṇa oracle mimics the ancestor who has possessed him. If the ancestor possessing him had a game leg, the oracle limps about, and when an ancestress is possessing him he ties a scarf round his head in the way a woman ties it.

The possession has the quality of drama. Sometimes a certain incident which occurred in the past is restaged during the possession. For instance, *A* of *X okka* was in the service of one of the Rājas, and he was put to death by the Rāja's order. It is alleged that this was due to the machinations of *B* of *Y okka*. Now, when an ancestor-propitiation is performed at *X okka*, the Baṇṇa oracle who is possessed by *A* shouts, 'I was betrayed by *B* of *Y*. I have descendants to proclaim my name. *B* of *Y* has none.' The *okka Y* was about to become extinct through the absence of male heirs when a girl of the *okka Y* was married in the *okka pariḷé* fashion to a boy of *okka Z*. *Okka Y* no doubt continues to exist today, but through the descendants of a female member and not through an unbroken line of agnatic kindred. Agnatic continuity has more prestige than continuity otherwise achieved. Of course, continuity, however achieved, is better than cessation.¹

A of *X* was induced to enter the Rāja's service by his father, who was a renowned magician feared by all on the Wynād side of Tanḍra river. At the ancestor-propitiation mentioned above, the Baṇṇa possessed by the son (*A* of *X*) accuses the Baṇṇa possessed by the father of being the real cause of the former's death, for, but for the father's pressure, the son would not have entered the service of the Rāja. 'Father' and 'son' start fighting with swords, and blood is

¹ This incident makes it clear that a grave offence against the ethical code results in the ending of the offender's *okka*. It is surprising to note, especially in view of the existence of special customary devices like *okka pariḷé* and *makka pariḷé*, that continuity through a female descendant may be regarded as ineffective. [x]

769 drawn. The descendants of the *X okka* who are looking on inter-
 ●782 vene and stop the fight.

787 Sometimes the oracle, possessed by a particular ancestor, inquires into the state of the ancestral estate. He asks the members of the *okka* to take him to the paddy-fields, and he might even sharply criticize them for not paying sufficient attention to the ancestral estate. He might inquire after the welfare of the members of the *okka*. It is said that sometimes these oracles point out treasure troves.

The living members ask the oracle questions concerning the various matters affecting them. 'Will my child recover from illness?' 'Why is a son not born to me?' And so on.

Before a particular ancestor leaves him, the oracle goes to the ancestor-shrine, where one of his party sacrifices a fowl or pig. Liquor, parched rice, coconut, and plantains are all offered to the ancestor represented by the oracle. The latter eats the parched rice and drinks the liquor, after which the ancestor who is possessing him leaves him. He gets ready to impersonate the next ancestor named by the head of the *okka*.

The last ancestor to possess the oracle is the Founder, in whose honour the oracle wears the upper part of his *téré* equipment. A pig is usually sacrificed to the Founder. The head of the *okka*

[621] requests the Founder to bless the descendants.

On the next morning the sacrificed animals are cooked and the entire village is invited to dinner. Thus an ancestor-propitiation is also an occasion for the expression of the solidarity of the village.

[437] The Baṇṇas get as their perquisites the heads of the animals sacrificed, provisions, some cooked meat, and also a little cash. This is in addition to the fixed amount of paddy they are paid annually at harvest. The Baṇṇas in a village serve the Coorg *okkas* in that village or *nāḍ* during ancestor-propitiations and other occasions when their services are required, and in return for this they receive a certain amount of paddy annually. The relationship between a Baṇṇa family and a Coorg *okka* has a certain continuity and members of the former are well acquainted with the history of the latter. The Baṇṇa family almost becomes the repository of the traditions and history of the Coorg *okkas* it serves.

The Baṇṇa oracle is identified with the ancestor who is possessing him, and his acts and words are considered to be the ancestor's acts and words. In fact, an oracle is always identified with the

THE CULT OF THE OKKA

165

ancestor or deity whose mouthpiece he is believed to be. But 789
 unbelievers are quite common among Coorgs, and an old man of 787
 sixty-five had not seen a single ancestor-propitiation, which he 782
 described as 'nonsense imported from Malabar'.¹ A sub-inspector
 of police considered both ancestor-propitiation and the worship of
 village-deities to be 'superstition'. Several educated Coorgs have
 told me they do not believe in ancestors and village-deities. The
 worship of fierce deities with pigs and arrack does not find favour
 with many, both Sanskrit and Western influences being opposed
 to it. Such opposition to propitiation of ancestors and village-
 deities frequently goes with a preference for Vēdānta of a kind.
 But still one comes across elders like Kuṭṭayya who tell you, 'they
 (the people) continue to disbelieve in ancestors till they get a knock
 on the head'. Repeated failure or illness makes a man go back to
 his old beliefs. Sometimes the Kaṇiya astrologer who is consulted
 says that the trouble is due to the failure to propitiate ancestors.

Sometimes a man or woman is possessed by an ancestor or
 ancestress, and while possessed, he or she might demand merely
 an offering of meat and liquor, or a full-fledged ancestor-propitia-
 tion with oracles, sacrifice of animals, &c. A person is identified with
 the spirit or deity possessing him, and consequently the demands
 of the person possessed by an ancestor are treated as the demands
 of the ancestor who is possessing him.

The offer of meat and liquor to ancestors as well as the elaborate 769
 ancestor-propitiation are non-Brahminical and non-Sanskritic 782
 modes of propitiation involving the offering of non-vegetarian food 184
 and liquor. Also no Brahmin priests are present and no Sanskrit
mantras are chanted. The non-Sanskritic modes of propitiation of
 ancestors contrast with the Sanskrit which consists in the offer
 of *pinda*, or balls of rice or rice-flour, under the guidance of a
 Brahmin priest.

Amma Coorgs, the highly Brahminized section of Coorgs, do
 not make offerings of curried meat and liquor to their ancestors.
 Instead, on a certain day in the year they offer balls of rice to the
 ancestors, and this resembles the annual propitiation of ancestors
 with purely vegetarian offerings and Sanskrit *mantras*, which pre-
 vails among Brahmins and other high castes all over India.

Both the Sanskrit and non-Sanskritic modes of propitiation

¹ This particular person was very irreligious. He had not even gone on pil-
 grimage to the source of the Kāvēri.

- 769 exist cheek by jowl as far as the bulk of Coorgs are concerned.
 ● 782 The more inquiring of the men see the two modes of propitiation
 184 as mutually inconsistent, but such an inconsistency does not seriously trouble anyone. All over India Sanskritic and non-Sanskritic customs, often involving beliefs regarded as mutually inconsistent, are found existing together. Usually, the non-Sanskritic custom either drops out or is transformed to suit the Sanskritic custom, but this process takes a very long time. There is also no doubt, however, that the non-Sanskritic customs of every caste as well as those of sects and peripheral groups are continually being Sanskritized. This has been happening for over 2,000 years all over India.

Splinter groups like Amma Coorgs are decades, if not centuries, in advance of their parent-groups: the former have solved their problem by Sanskritizing their customs entirely while the latter are more conservative. Sometimes the splinter groups are so far in advance of their neighbours that they incur the wrath of everyone. They might even be ostracized by the other castes.

XV

- 776 It has already been mentioned that every *okka* has a *nāta*, which
 778 is a platform where unhewn stones representing cobra-deities are
 562 embedded. Vegetation is allowed to grow freely around this platform. There is a ban on women approaching the cobra-platform during their periods as the cobra-deities are extremely sensitive to impurity of any sort. Though women no longer observe seclusion during their periods, they are even now afraid of going near the cobra-platform because of the belief that its defilement would result in some misfortune to their *okka*. The angered cobra-deity
 [539] may be roused to bite a member. This is clearly seen in the ancient saw, 'The deceit of women is very great, O, Snake, please do not bite us' (*pommakkada māya marmāya pāmbē, ariyatē tiriyaṭē koriyaṭē pāmbē*): a member prays to the cobra-deity not to bite even though it has been angered by women going near the cobra-platform during their periods. Women are likely to conceal such violations
 [783] from others, especially males. If they are frank enough to tell what they have done, purificatory and expiatory rites could be performed
 776 to appease the cobra-deity.
 778 Among Hindus all over India, cobras and the ant-hills in which

they live are worshipped on certain occasions. In south India there⁷⁷⁶ is a belief that a cobra lives to a very great age, and that as it gets⁷⁷⁸ older its tail becomes shorter. During the last period of its life it is said to develop wings. Coorgs share these beliefs, and some of them assert that a cobra-platform is built above the spot where a cobra ended its earthly existence.

All over India there is a reluctance to kill the cobra even though⁷⁷⁶ it is a dangerous creature. Coorgs abstain from killing cobras^[784] found in temples and believed to be harmless, whereas they do not hesitate to kill cobras found outside temples.

The following incident is significant: A's brother did not consider it a sin to kill cobras. He one day found two cobras copulating and shot one of them dead. Several years passed without A's brother obtaining a son. Some Brahmins told him that he had committed a great sin in killing a sacred creature like the cobra and that he would not have a son till he had performed the necessary expiatory ritual. They further told him that the sin was so great that even after he had performed the expiatory ritual no more than one son would be born to him. He duly performed the necessary^[788] expiatory ritual under the guidance of Brahmin priests, and later he made a pilgrimage to the great cobra-shrine of Subramanya in the Tulu country. Sometime afterwards his wife gave birth to a son, and together with his wife and son he again visited the shrine of Subramanya to express his gratitude to the deity.

Formerly, in the month of Scorpio, lamps were lit before the⁷⁷⁶ cobra-platform every evening. In addition, in a few Coorg okkas,⁷⁸² a Brahmin priest visited the platform and worshipped the cobra-¹⁸⁴ deity, using Sanskrit *mantras*.

In the cobra-worship of Coorgs are to be found certain elements which are common to Hindus all over India, others confined to Hindus in Peninsular India, and yet others which are found only in Malabar, South Canara, and Coorg. The worship of cobras takes certain forms in Malabar which are very similar to those in Coorg: in the former area it is common to find in the houses of high-caste Hindus a shrine for cobras in the south-western corner of the large compound round the ancestral house. The cobra-deities in a house are intimately associated with it. The vegetation growing around a cobra-platform may not be cut down, and no one in a condition of ritual impurity may approach the platform.

In the Kannada, Tamil, and Telugu countries, on the other

776 hand, cobra-worship has a different orientation. In each village or
 ● 782 locality, a platform is built round a peepul-tree (*ficus religiosa*) and
 184 on this platform are kept sculptured images of single snakes, or of
 two intertwined snakes. Such a platform is worshipped by all the
 people in the locality.

Cobra-worship among Coorgs has the same orientation it has in
 Malabar but for one important difference: in Malabar the deity
 Subramanya does not seem to be connected with cobras, whereas
 everywhere else in south India cobras are identified with Subra-
 [778] manya, the second son of Shiva. Shrines dedicated to Subramanya,
 some of them well-known centres of pilgrimage, are commonly
 found in south India.

776 The identification of cobras with Subramanya demonstrates the
 779 way in which Sanskritic Hinduism operates. The worship of
 177 cobras is very popular among all Hindus, and the identification
 of cobras with Subramanya provides a door for the entry of
 Sanskritic Hinduism. People who until then had only been wor-
 shipping cobras came to know about Subramanya, the son of
 Shiva. They also learn of the story of Subramanya's birth, which
 is a tiny slice of Hindu mythology; and of Shiva, his relation to
 other gods like Vishnu and Brahma, and so on. Pilgrimages to
 shrines dedicated to Subramanya became popular, and these
 shrines again are a source for the further spread of Sanskritic
 Hinduism. There are usually myths about these shrines and each
 such myth tells the pilgrim a little more about Sanskritic Hinduism.

776 Stones representing Pūda and Guḷika are frequently found in
 778 the compound of a Coorg's house. Pūda is the Tamil corruption of
 the Sanskritic *bhūta*, which means a spirit. Pūda is frequently one
 of the deities in a village temple.

Guḷika in the Tamil country is the name of one of the eight
 serpents supporting the earth in Hindu mythology. In Malabar
 and Coorg, however, he is better known as the son of Saturn. He
 is also referred to as Māndi.

[761] Guḷika is associated with death: a man is supposed to see
 [788] Guḷika just before dying. Horoscopes drawn up in Malabar and
 [789] Coorg show the position of Guḷika, and this is said to indicate
 when the native is going to die. When a number of deaths take
 place in a Coorg's house it is customary to plant a stone called
 Mrityu Guḷika (death Guḷika). This is believed to put an end to
 the deaths.

THE CULTS OF THE LARGER SOCIAL UNITS 179

heavy jungle. A festival of a village-deity usually implies co-⁷⁹⁶ operation with the people of another village or *nāḍ*, or with certain castes or tribes living in different villages or *nāḍs*.

II

Village-deities are an All-India phenomenon. By this it is ¹⁰¹ meant that the deities who are worshipped in villages in various ⁷⁷⁶ parts of India have more or less the same character and attributes, and that the technique of propitiating them is broadly similar. These statements no doubt sound vague and general, but any attempt to make them more precise will have to take account of exceptions at every point.

While the phenomenon is broadly similar all over India, there are important regional variations. Generally speaking, within India, each region or district has a greater unity than the larger area of which it is a part. Inside peninsular India, for instance, each linguistic area represents an area of greater cultural homogeneity and social solidarity. But there are also cultural forms which are common to two or more linguistic areas. Malayālam and Tamil areas have certain cultural forms in common; and similarly Kannaḍa, Telugu, and Marāṭhi areas have some cultural forms in common. Within each linguistic area too there are differences: cultural forms present in the centre of a linguistic area might not be present in the peripheral regions or present only in an altered form. Geographical barriers also usually represent cultural barriers. For instance, cultural forms found in the Malabar littoral strip have great difficulty in spreading into the mainland of peninsular India. A country like Coorg, which lies at the periphery of three linguistic areas, Kannaḍa, Malayālam, and Tuḷu, has certain cultural forms in common with each of them.

Throughout peninsular India village-deities are represented by ¹⁷¹ unhewn stones or by crude images of stone or wood. They are ⁷⁷⁸ either housed in shrines which are usually not very elaborate, or ⁷⁸² simply embedded in the earth without any roof above them. A shrine dedicated to a village-deity is frequently found either at the foot of a tree or in the shade of a grove. Worship may or may not be offered daily at these shrines. There is no uniform rule applicable in this matter. Practice varies from village to village, and even from temple to temple: in some temples worship (*pūja*) is

180 THE CULTS OF THE LARGER SOCIAL UNITS

171 offered every day, in others once a week, while still others come to
 778 life only annually or once every few years, when the festival of the
 ● 782 deity is being celebrated. Such a festival usually lasts several days
 [785] and culminates in the sacrifice of fowl, sheep, goats, and buffaloes.
 [789] Devotees walk barefoot across fire, gash themselves with swords,
 and so on, on the last day of the festival.

171 While the priests at the Sanskrit temples are usually¹ Brahmins,
 793 men belonging to one of the non-Brahmin castes are frequently
 priests at the temples dedicated to village-deities. Here again
 practice varies from region to region, village to village, and temple
 to temple. For instance, in Coorg, Brahmins from South Canara are
 commonly priests at temples dedicated to village-deities. In Mysore
 and the Tamil country, on the other hand, a member of a non-
 Brahmin caste is normally priest at the temple of a village-deity.

171 Throughout peninsular India, excluding Kēraḷa, Māri is a
 776 common village-deity. She presides over epidemic diseases such as
 [64] plague, smallpox, and cholera, which usually occur in summer.
 The propitiation of Māri with offerings and festival takes place in
 summer, and also whenever plague or cholera or smallpox breaks
 out.

Village-deities in peninsular India are frequently females. This
 is specially true of the area east of the Western Ghats. Ellamma
 (literally 'boundary-mother') is a familiar deity in Telugu and
 Tamil villages. Kālī is another familiar goddess.

All village-deities are not, however, goddesses: there are also
 gods. Ayyanār, for instance, is a very popular god in Tamil
 villages and he keeps watch on the village when the villagers are
 asleep. Birēdēvaru is a popular god in Kannaḍa villages.

171 All over peninsular India, with the exception of the Malayālam-
 782 speaking areas, bull buffaloes are favourite animals for sacrifice to
 village-deities. In the Malayālam-speaking areas, however, the
 favourite animals for sacrifice are the pig, goat, sheep, and fowl.
 The south-western part of Coorg shares numerous cultural forms
 with Malabar, and there the bull buffalo is not sacrificed to
 village-deities. In the eastern and northern parts, however,
 buffaloes are sacrificed to village-deities, especially Māri. But

¹ I say 'usually' and not 'invariably' because sometimes there are non-Brahmin priests at the shrines of Sanskrit deities. For instance, in many temples dedicated to Shiva in one or other of his numerous forms there are Lingāyat priests.

THE CULTS OF THE LARGER SOCIAL UNITS 181

several years ago, in some villages near Mercara, Coorgs successfully opposed the sacrifice of bull buffaloes to Māri on the ground that buffaloes were the same as cows and the slaughter of cows (and oxen) should not be allowed under any circumstances. It is interesting to note that elsewhere in south India a similar reverence for cattle did not prevent the sacrifice of bull buffaloes to village-deities. Very recently, however, the local leaders of the Indian National Congress have been everywhere more or less successfully opposing the propitiation of village-deities with blood-offerings.

The most common village-deities in Coorg are Bhagavati (Povvedi) and Ayyappa (or Shasta). The former is male and the latter female. Several other deities such as Chaundi or Chāmundi (f.), Kāli, (f.), and Kētrappa (or Kshētrapāla (m.)) are also occasionally found as village-deities.

All the above deities are also commonly found in Malabar and South Canara. The traditional songs which are sung in Coorg at the festivals of village-deities make the latter out to be immigrants from Malabar or South Canara.¹ In these folksongs an important deity coming from Malabar or South Canara into Coorg usually brings with him a few minor deities who meet him on the way and beg of him to find them shelter in Coorg. Sometimes deities who come from Malabar go round to the established temples in Coorg such as the source of the river Kāvēri, and Sārtāvu (Ayyappa) temple in Makki, the Subramanya temple at Pāḍi, &c., and beg one of these latter deities for shelter.

The song sung at the festival of Kētrappa tells the story of the coming of Kētrappa into Bēngūr from Malabar: a party of Bēngūr youths led by Kallumāḍa Ayyappa go in a caravan to Mādāyi in Malabar, and the leader is possessed by the deity Kētrappa while returning to Coorg after selling the rice carried by the caravan. The song tells us that a number of deities, viz. Pattu Kūṭ Pātāla, Povvedi (or Bhagavati), Chaundi, and Pūda request Kētrappa (represented by his oracle Kallumāḍa Ayyappa) to grant them shelter. Kētrappa promises them shelter and settles them in Bēngūr and surrounding places such as Ivattu-okkalu, Heravanāḍ, and the Kopatti Hills.

It is obvious that these folksongs cannot be treated as accurate

¹ Frequently the songs tell us that a group of deities set out from the mythical Milk Sea. It is interesting to note that in such cases they reach some town on the Malabar Coast first and then proceed to Coorg.

THE CULTS OF THE LARGER SOCIAL UNITS 193

796 few years, a third man whether he should go ahead with a business
787 or other venture he has been contemplating for some time, and so on. (He answers questions again that night.)

Outside the temple compound Poleyas oracles are possessed by their deities. They run about possessed, and their possession comes to an end when the possession of the Bhadrakālī oracle comes to an end. While possessed, the Poleyas oracles may be called upon to exorcise evil spirits from people.

- 796 After the possession stops, devotees make offerings of money
● [782] (*kāṇikē*) to the deity.¹ Miniature silver representations of a human being, of any part of the body, and of a cradle are made by those who had vowed to make such offerings on recovery from an illness, or recovery of the normal use of an organ, or the birth of a child, respectively.²

The afternoon concludes with the Brahmin priests' offering to the devotees parched rice sweetened with jaggery and coffee. The villagers then disperse.

V

At about 9 p.m. the people of Kuklūr and sightseers from other villages gather together at the threshing-yard of the Nandiyanda *okka*. Mēdas and Poleyas play on their drums and pipes, and Coorg men and boys dance to their music. Four villagers beat the big drum (*dōḷu*), singing the drum song which is about Bhadrakālī. Votive animals, to be offered to Bhadrakālī, are all assembled here before being driven to the temple. In 1941 there were twenty-three sheep, three goats, and fifty fowls. This was exclusive of one 'village goat' (*ūrāḍu*) and two 'village fowls' (*ūru kōḷi*) which are subscribed for by the entire village.³

- [170] With a brass mask of Bhadrakālī as nucleus, a Paṇika builds a circular *téré*—a framework of bamboo covered with thin sheets of the pith of the *pāmbalé* plant. This *téré* is leaned against two pegs and then the Paṇika worships it. He kills a chicken and cooks it in

¹ Collections are also made on the ninth and eleventh days. The expenses of the festival are met out of the money raised at the collections. Rs110 was collected on the tenth day.

[170] ² This custom prevails all over south India.

³ It is known that formerly between 300-400 animals were annually sacrificed to Bhadrakālī. The number has fallen off very greatly now. A very small section of Coorg opinion would like to do away with animal sacrifice altogether.

THE CULTS OF THE LARGER SOCIAL UNITS 195

Once the third round is completed, the Paṇika dances before the shrine. The villagers let off fireworks, the Mārāyas beat drums, and there is general tumult and shouting. 796
787

The Bhadrakālī oracle executes a vigorous dance for about forty-five minutes before the shrine. After the dance is over he selects two swords out of a number offered by the Brahmin priest and then proceeds to the roofed platform at the entrance to the temple, where he declares how many of the votive animals may be sacrificed to the Poleya deities. Then he proceeds to place one sword on his head and hit it with the other. Soon his head is covered entirely with blood. The Poleya oracles gash themselves following the Bhadrakālī oracle. The latter then proceeds to the veranda of the shrine, where he gashes himself more. This gashing is called *narāhuti* (human sacrifice). After the oracle has stopped gashing himself he answers questions. He orders the Paṇika to cease dancing and remove the *téré*. The Brahmin priest then offers him consecrated water which he drinks. The priest begs the oracle, identified with Bhadrakālī, to pardon the lapses which might have occurred through ignorance and to leave the village without inflicting any harm. The oracle orders those present to conduct the festival properly, and then the possession ceases. [785]

The oracle is completely identified with the deity supposed to be possessing him. Even the Brahmin priest believed that the oracle of Bhadrakālī was really the deity herself. It was temporarily forgotten that he was a Coorg by caste. There was a look of fear on the priest's face when he was requesting the deity (the oracle) to leave the village without harming anyone. But though the oracle is identified with Bhadrakālī, he does not enter the innermost room where Bhadrakālī's image is kept. That is to say, the implications of the identification of the oracle with Bhadrakālī are not fully worked out. Only the priest may go into the innermost room, and this rule is not relaxed in favour of the oracle who is temporarily identified with Bhadrakālī.

After the Bhadrakālī oracle returns to his normal condition, the priest shuts the door of the shrine and goes home. Women, children, and a good many spectators also leave. Only the festival-priests and other functionaries remain, along with those who have brought the votive animals, to witness the decapitation that follows. The Paṇika, whose duty it is to sacrifice the animals brought by devotees, makes a small incision in the little finger of his left hand 796
782

196 THE CULTS OF THE LARGER SOCIAL UNITS

796 before decapitating the animals. As soon as a few drops of blood
 782 drip from his finger, he sacrifices the 'village fowls'. Then he
 decapitates the 'village goat' before the shrine. The decapitation of
 the other animals takes place only after the decapitation of the
 'village fowls' and 'village goat'. The Paṇika receives as his per-
 quisite the heads of the 'village goat' and of all the fowls.

After all the animals have been cut, the assembled villagers turn
 their backs on the scene of carnage and remain silent for a few
 minutes. This is to enable the deity to consume the essence of the
 sacrificed animals in peace. They then turn round and sing the
ānanda pāṭi (the song of joy), after which the villagers depart for
 their homes with the headless carcasses. The headless 'village
 goat' is tied to a high branch of the *dēvā kaṇigalē* (oleander) tree
 near the temple. It remains suspended there till noon of the twelfth
 day, when it is taken down and cooked for the communal dinner.
 It is said that vultures and kites do not touch the carcass of the
 'village goat', nor does the flesh go bad as it normally would in
 the heat of summer. This is attributed to the power of Bhadrakālī.

VI

On the eleventh morning a representative of the Kaṇṇandra
 796 *okka* cleans the temple yard of bloodstains and he is paid three
 [782] *paṇas* (about nine annas) for performing this duty. The Brahmin
 priest then ritually purifies the temple and temple yard by sprink-
 ling consecrated water everywhere and uttering the appropriate
 Sanskrit *mantras*.

Races are held on the eleventh afternoon for 'prostitutes' (*chūlē*)
 and for 'horses' (*kuḍurē*). The Māleṭṭira, Moṇṇandra, and Nandi-
 yaṇḍa *okkas* are each required to send one 'prostitute' and one
 'horse' for the races. 'Prostitutes' and 'horses' are regarded as
 [782] votive offerings. For instance, when a boy is ill, his parents might
 make a vow to the effect that they will dress him up as a 'prostitute'
 at the coming festival.

Getting the 'prostitute' and 'horse' ready in time is not very easy,
 and clear, if elaborate, rules are laid down requiring certain *okkas*
 to help each of the three *okkas* charged with the responsibility of
 making the offerings. For instance, the Tātandra *okka* is required
 to help the Māleṭṭira *okka*, the Kuṭṭandra *okka* (now split into
 two) to help the Moṇṇandra *okka*, and the Māleṭṭira *okka* to help

204 THE CULTS OF THE LARGER SOCIAL UNITS

634 When the fortunes of a *nāḍ* were at a low ebb, the elders of that
[788] *nāḍ* went on a pilgrimage to the patron-deity of the *nāḍ* and prayed to him for the birth of a hero in their midst.

[773] Legends grew up about a hero. Cheṭṭira Appanna is supposed to have accomplished everything he did before he was sixteen days old. The hero had power to curse. After he died, he became a powerful spirit, a *bira*.

The boundary of a *nāḍ* obtains importance on some ritual occasions. A groom passing in state through a *nāḍ* to the bride's village is given the 'plantain honour' at the boundary of the *nāḍ*.

634 Richter describes a custom which brings out the ritual importance of the *nāḍ*-boundary:
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In cases of sore afflictions befalling a whole village or *nāḍ* such as small-pox, cholera, cattle-disease, the ryots [peasants] combine to appease the wrath of Māriamma [the goddess Māri who presides over these epidemics] by collecting contributions of pigs, rice, coconuts, bread and plantains, from the different houses and depositing them at the *mandu* [green]; whence they are carried in a procession with tom-toms. In one basket there is some rice, and the members of each house on coming out bring a little rice in the hand, waving it round the head, throw it into the basket, with the belief that the dreaded evil will depart with the rice. At last the offerings are put down on the *nāḍ*-boundary, the animals are killed, their blood is offered on a stone, the rice and basket are left, and the rest of the provisions consumed by those composing the procession. The people of adjoining villages and *nāḍ*s repeat the ceremony, and thus the epidemic is supposed to be banished from the country. In still greater calamities, a flock of sheep is driven from *nāḍ* to *nāḍ* and, at last, expelled from the country.¹

X

[594] There is no social unit among Coorgs which is without a head.
622 Every *okka* has a headman and the headman's wife is the head of
[431] the women in the *okka*. A temple has a headman with a number of
029 officials under him. A village has a village-headman, and above the village is the *nāḍ*, and every *nāḍ* has at least one *nāḍ*-headman, and frequently more than one. The highest category of headmen are,
[634] however, the headmen of *stné* or *désa*, of whom there are eight in all. Coorgs have a keen sense of discipline, which is associated in

¹ *Manual of Coorg*, p. 170.

THE CULTS OF THE LARGER SOCIAL UNITS 209

779 touches Sanskritic ritual idiom at several points. There is also the
634 classic instance of Kaliyāṭaṇḍa Ponnappa (alias Ajjappa), the fighter, magician, and doctor, whose apotheosized spirit is now-days worshipped by Coorgs in every part of Coorg.

769 The story of Kaliyāṭaṇḍa Ponnappa is not entirely fictitious, but
173 has a basis of fact. He was a descendant of the Kaliyāṭ *okka* in Kunjala village in Nālknāḍ, and very early in his life he seems to have gone to Malabar to study medicine and magic. After his return to Kunjala he became famous for his magical powers: he was said to have under his control the 'ten spirits of the underworld' (*pattu kūṭ pātāla*) which did what he wanted them to do. He was also a fighter, and he actually died while fighting the soldiers of Karaṇembāhu, the chief of Bhāgamaṇḍlanāḍ at that time. His friend and companion Boḷtu committed suicide after Ponnappa's death.

The spirit of Ponnappa caused headache in everyone. A famous magician was sent for and he had the spirits of Ponnappa and Boḷtu and the 'ten spirits of the underworld' imprisoned in a conch-shell. The conch-shell was buried under a stone in Malabar. But some time later an accident released the spirits from the conch-shell, and subsequently the spirits of Ponnappa and Boḷtu, and their common friend Kuṭṭapāla Māyila, all found shelter in the well-known temple of Sārtāvu (Ayyappa) of Makki.

[79] Ponnappa and his companions have found shelter in several temples in south-west Coorg. There are Ponnappa's oracles everywhere in Coorg Proper, but none may practise as an oracle unless he has been authorized by the chief oracle of Ponnappa in Makki.

• [782] People in every part of Coorg vow to make offerings to Ponnappa when they are suffering from bodily aches. It is believed that Sārtāvu (Ayyappa) has conferred on Ponnappa the power to cure aches. There is an annual festival in honour of Ponnappa at the Sārtāvu temple in Makki.

769 Educated Coorgs point out that Ponnappa is not a deity, but
776 only the very powerful spirit of a great magician and doctor who, in addition, died while fighting. The spirit of Ponnappa was, to begin with, guilty of anti-social conduct, giving headaches to everyone. That was the reason for its imprisonment in a conch-shell. After its release, it sought and obtained the protection of Sārtāvu of Makki. It then no more caused headaches, but cured them instead. It was subordinated to a well-known deity before being worshipped.

210 THE CULTS OF THE LARGER SOCIAL UNITS

769 It is important to remember that Sārtāvu is Ayyappa, the son
776 of Shiva and Vishṇu in the form of Mōhini. The lawless spirit
of a magician-cum-fighter is tamed by making it subordinate to a
deity who has been completely Sanskritized.

XII

182 The hierarchical idea inherent in caste expresses itself in a
514 variety of ways at the festival of a village-deity. For instance, at
782 the Kētrappa festival in Bēngūr, the fowls brought as offerings to
the deity by members of the higher castes are decapitated by a
Coorg, and the pigs brought by them, by a Paṇika. But neither the
Coorg nor the Paṇika decapitates the animals brought by the
lower castes like the Mēda and Poleyā. The animals brought by
the latter are decapitated by a Mēda.

Usually, the man who sacrifices the animal gets its head as his
perquisite. The animal is then divided into two halves, one half
going to the owner and the other to the village. Each *okka* in the
village gets a share in the half which goes to the village. But the
animals offered by Mēdas and Poleyas are not divided in this
manner, nor do they get a share in the animals brought by the
higher castes. That is to say, in this context, the village does not
include the Mēda and Poleyā. Nor does it include the Brahmin who
does not sacrifice animals to deities.

182 The deities Kākkōṭ Achchayya, and Akkavva, according to the
84 folksong, leave Malabar to seek shelter in Coorg. After crossing
773 into Coorg they meet a Poleyā deity, Kāryappa, whom they take as
their servant. The three deities then go to Kākkōṭ village where they
see some children playing. Kākkōṭ Achchayya and Akkavva
possess Coorg children, whereas Kāryappa possesses a Poleyā boy.
In this instance, the caste-idiom is completely projected into
mythology and religion.

776 The deities Kētrappa (m.) and Koḍli Povvedi (f.) are both
182 recipients of offerings of non-vegetarian dishes and liquor. Coorgs
explain this by saying that both the deities lost their caste on
coming into Coorg. In fact there is an incident in the Kētrappa
song giving an account of the change in the dietetic habits of the
deity: while returning to Bēngūr from Malabar, Kallumāḍa
Ayyaṇṇa, who was possessed by Kētrappa, put everyone to sleep
while he climbed a *bainé* (*caryota urens*) tree and drank toddy from

181 he had put away at the beginning of the rainy season. The break
 796 in the continuity of the relationship between a man and, say, his
 411 gun, creates some 'awkwardness' and so the weapons are wor-
 shipped before being used. Later, a collective hunt is held.

224 The Kaniya astrologer decides what periods of time are auspi-
 778 cious for worshipping the weapons and for cutting branches of the
 [787] *poyyakané* tree. He also decides when the village or *nāḍ* should
 have the collective hunt, in which direction the hunting party
 should go if they want the hunt to be successful, and, finally, the
 man who should lead the hunt.

226 The branches of the *poyyakané* tree are used for making barriers
 which are erected in the rice-fields a few weeks after the end of
 transplantation, in order to catch the small fish which abound in
 the waterlogged fields during this part of the year. These fish are
 regarded as a great delicacy, and catching them is a favourite sport.

[538] An improvident man is described in a proverb as one who lives on
 fish caught in the fields and on rice borrowed from neighbours at
 a ruinous rate of interest.

411 The weapons are cleaned and kept either in the sacred central
 782 hall or in the south-western room. They are marked with sandal-
 wood paste. (Some Coorgs, like Brahmins on the western coast,
 mark their foreheads with sandalwood paste before worshipping a
 deity.) The weapons are worshipped with flowers, and a favourite
 flower used for worship on this occasion is the *iḍku* which derives
 its name from the fact that it looks like a gun. Curried meat and
 cooked rice-flour are offered on plantain leaves to the weapons.

224 After dinner, the men put on their gowns, and assemble in the
 south-western room, or central hall. The head of the *okka* hands
 over to each his weapons and the latter salutes the former after
 receiving his weapons.¹ The headman says, as he stands over the
 weapons, 'Fight a tiger and boar by stepping aside the charging
 beast [i.e. avoid standing in the direct line of the charge], do not
 underrate your enemy, fight him face to face, stand by your friend,
 be obedient to the king, and do not forget God.'

The headman of the *okka* feeds the domestic dogs with cooked
 rice-flour. Then, just before the men of the *okka* leave the house
 for the village green he says, 'Let the horned deer and tusked boar
 cross my path.' Finally, he fires a shot in the direction of the
 jungle.

[857] ¹ A boy who is old enough to hunt receives his first gun on this occasion.

Several competitions are held on the village green. The men are asked to shoot at a target (*kuri*). A variant of this is shooting at a target while running (*ōṭu boḍi*). Three stout plantain stems are planted very close to each other and men are invited to cut through them with one stroke of the Coorg sword. Coorg youths struggle for the possession of a coconut (*téngé pōré*). There is a high-jump competition, and then there is a form of putting-the-shot: the competitors are required to throw a round stone backwards over their heads. He who throws it farthest wins. 526

All the adult males in every *okka* in the village or *nāḍ* have to co-operate in the collective hunt that is held after the 'festival of arms'. Each *okka* takes its dogs to the hunt. Every *dog* gets a portion of the meat of the animal killed. Every man taking part in the hunt gets a share, and those who hit the game first and second get an extra share each. He who first hit the game is also entitled to the animal's head, while the one who was the first to touch the killed animal's tail is given one of the front legs in addition to his ordinary share. 224

A man who shoots at an animal must not only hit it, but must draw blood as well. Blood, in this context, is referred to as *nambigé*, which means evidence. Failure to draw blood is punished: thorns are drawn across the bare buttocks of the unfortunate hunter before the assembled members of the hunt.

It was mentioned earlier that a man who killed a panther was entitled to have *nari mangala* performed on the village green, whereas he who killed a tiger was entitled to have it done on the *nāḍ* green. [555]

It was pointed out earlier that Ayyappa, the son of Vishṇu and Shiva, becomes the hunting god *par excellence* in Coorg, roaming the forests at night, whistling to his pack of dogs. Vows are made to him before a hunt, and offerings of clay images of dogs and horses are made before his shrines in the jungle. [776] [782] ●

The general preference for the martial way of life expresses itself in belief, ritual, and myth. For instance, the Sanskrit belief that an eclipse is caused when the serpent Rāhu tries to devour the sun or moon provides the basis for a characteristically Coorg story. 18/ 539 821
A one-eyed cobra lived in an anthill and near by was a creeper which had put forth an enormous gourd in which lived a hare. A strong wind blew the gourd off the creeper, and it broke when it hit the ground, setting the hare free. The cobra went after the running hare,

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wives, but not his brothers' wives, unless they are much older than himself,¹ must pour over him one pot of water each. After this he is arrayed in full Coorg dress, including the turban, dagger, and sword, and puts on heavy bangles and neck-chains. His long coat (kupia) should be white, as all such garments were anciently. The bride likewise is bathed by women and girls from among her relatives, no one being barred from this office except widows. She is dressed in her best sari and headcloth and decorated with a great number of ornaments, toe and finger rings, earrings, necklaces and chains, and hair-ornaments. When the guests have all arrived in the early morning (all wearing Coorg dress, though the men need not wear white coats), the bride and groom in their respective houses are brought forth into the nellaki. Each is wearing in addition to their full dress a cloth over the head, the bride's covering her face but left unfastened in front. Each, conducted by a near relative or friend of the same sex (in the man's case frequently the husband of his sister, in the woman's the wife of her brother), circles three times in clockwise direction a stool between two standing lamps and then is seated facing to the east on the stool, which has been covered with a cloth. The nellaki was anciently the place for the ceremony; at present it often takes place in the yard of the house in a pandal built for the occasion and fitted with the stool and two standing lamps, but not with a hanging lamp. This shift of scene is due to the fact that the house is frequently too small to accommodate all the guests. During the ceremony four Coorg musicians beat on drums and sing the wedding song (this I hope to present and discuss linguistically elsewhere).

When the central figure of the ceremony is seated, his or her mother, or if the mother is dead or a widow, the eldest married woman in the sib who is not a widow, stands in front of him or her. She takes from a large flat plate of rice a handful and throws some first to the hanging lamp, apparently as an offering to the ancestors of the sib (if the ceremony is outside in the pandal, this is omitted), then over her head towards the sun;

¹ Younger ones are said to be restrained by shyness, but the fact is that they are women who are referred to as macini and are possible spouses of the man, in case they should be widowed and he should become a widower. Such relatives of a man, viz. all those whom he classes as macini and mamma, whether they are blood-relations (i.e. cross-cousins) or related merely by marriage, are the subjects of taboos with relation to him. They begin to operate when both parties have attained puberty. They may not touch one another, except in case of real necessity, nor may they sit on the same bench. Other specific taboos operating between these cross-cousins seem to be lacking, since in general Coorg men and women observe about the same taboos in speech and action that are observed in polite circles in western society. The specific taboos do not operate between any other classes or relatives; it may be observed that the taboo on touching is merely a very small extension of the usual reluctance of a Coorg man to touch a woman.

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KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE AMONG THE COORGs

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with both hands then a little is sprinkled on the seated person successively at the joints of knees, elbows and shoulders, and finally on the head. Then she takes a small brass vessel (called *kundi*) with a long spout, which is filled with milk, puts the spout through the open front of the veil to the mouth of the person, who drinks a little. Then she puts some money contained in a small bag into the hand of the person, and nowadays at least sprinkles rice into his lap, though this is unnecessary. The groom or bride then bends forward and three times touches the feet of the mother, after each touch putting the joined hands to his or her forehead. During this salutation the mother puts both hands on the child's head in blessing and ends by joining her hands and bringing them to her forehead. The mother is followed by all female relatives in some approach to an order by seniority and by the female guests in turn, and each goes through the same ceremony, the only difference being that gifts are presented without being enclosed in a bag. Widows are not debarred from performing the ceremony. If the female is younger than the bride or groom, the salutation made by touching the feet is performed by the guest and not by the bride or groom. After the women have finished, the men do the same thing, the first being the father, or if he is dead, the eldest male member of the sib, followed by the other male members of the sib in some approach to order by seniority and by other relatives and the male guests. The bride or groom is then conducted from the *nellaki* or from outside the house to his or her own room, and all the relatives and guests proceed to feast, first the men, then the women, and finally the servants of the house (who belong to the *Holeya* [*poleyē*] caste).

After the feast the guests are dismissed with the usual salutations (generally an abbreviated form of the salutation described above). Somewhat more formality attends the departure of the male members of the sib to which the mother of the bride or groom respectively originally belonged. They are conducted with music to the small pasture near the house and are seated there on mats. They are given betel and such light refreshments as sweets. Then a Coorg sword (*odikati*) is offered to the eldest member of this sib with an invitation to cut down three plantain stems that have been fixed in the earth. Since each stem is nearly a foot thick and cutting each across with one slanting blow is a matter of strength and knack, he usually hands the sword to some younger member of his party who cuts them. It is said to be mark of respect to offer the sword, and likewise a matter of honour to cut the stems cleanly. At present the whole affair is treated rather jestingly and it is said that foreign bodies are inserted into the stems to make the stroke a more difficult matter. The sword is a weighty and well-balanced weapon and those stems that I have seen after they were cut had been neatly and accurately severed with one blow.

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COORG TRIBES AND CASTES

585 gossip, which is now and then broken by the noisy band of musicians.
 574 Meanwhile, the bride and bridegroom are bathed, he is dressed in his new
 292 kuppasam (coat) with a long red cotton or silk sash round his waist and
 [301] his friends fasten into it the new pichathi, a present from his father,
 [405] together with a watch, and put jewelled gold rings on his fingers and a
 carefully tied turban in the approved Coorg fashion. A bright coloured
 handkerchief thrown over his shoulder completes his dress. The bride
 who is fully decked is left to the care of her friends.

585 In the bridegroom's house the wedding party proceed to the kayimada,
 [712] carrying a light which had been kindled at the sacred house lamp, and
 [354] ignite an earthen lamp there and invoke the blessings of the ancestors.
 On returning to the house the principal members of the family enter first
 into the inner hall, and the younger men follow and offer their customary
 salutations. At the auspicious hour, the bridegroom seeks the permission
 of the master of the house, and the elders to seat himself on the low three-
 legged stool kept in readiness and placed upon a carpet between two lighted
 lamps. These lamps trimmed with many wicks stand in metal dishes filled
 with rice by the side of which is a spouted brass vessel with milk. On the
 bridegroom being seated, the master of the house takes a handful of rice and
 585 strews it over his head and shoulders uttering the words, "Live well; and
 431 prosper well by God's favour", gives him a sip of milk, and drops a piece
 of money or other present in his lap, and passes on. Four men closely
 related to him do likewise. Then five of the nearest female relations
 [576] including the mistress of the house repeat the same formalities. Then the
 guests, male and female, do the same. Old people only touch the bride-
 groom's shoulder, those of equal age shake hands, while those below touch
 his feet as a mark of respect. As the presents accumulate, they are taken
 care of by a friend who sits near him and watches what and by whom they
 [589] are given. Widowers and widows do not take part in the proceedings
 [777] because they are unlucky.

585 The same ceremony is gone through in the bride's house at about the
 same time, but women have precedence over men. After this ceremony,
 the bridegroom rises and takes his meal with a group of twelve of the
 nearest relations (groomsmen) and the Aruva. The guests who are
 [574] invited are sumptuously fed in the leafy shed put up for the occasion.
 [533] Various kinds of liquor are served. During and after feasting, the music
 makes a discordant and deafening noise.

After feasting, the bridegroom's party go to the bride's house,
 which is generally some miles away. On such occasions a Coorg
 bridegroom, mounted on a pony, dismounts at the gate of the
 bride's residence which he approaches barefooted. When he has advanced

[P 51]

CHAPTER IX

COORG (Contd.)

THE worship of the demons and ancestor-spirits constitutes the religion of the Coorgs. They have been influenced by contact with the Malayali, Canarese, Brahmanical and Lingayat superstitions. The Malayalis have made themselves indispensable at their demon and ancestor worship. The Tulus are their Pujaris. The worship of Mariamman (the smallpox demon) was introduced by the Mysoreans. The domiciled Brahmans of Coorg have succeeded in the introduction of Mahadeva and Subrahmanya, and have temples erected and idols set up for worship. The Lingayats or Sivachars are also endeavouring to introduce the worship of Linga. Since the days of Vira Rajendra, Christianity was introduced in Coorg, and there is a Roman Catholic Settlement with a fine church at Virajpet, but Christianity has not made much headway in Coorg. [771/ 776 177 797]

Ancestor-Worship

The ancestor-worship of the Coorgs is based on the belief that the spirits of the dead hover inside and outside the Coorg dwellings and cause endless trouble in the absence of adequate propitiation. Each Coorg house has a *Kaimatta* (a building close at hand) under a tree in the fields or in the yard close to the house. This is a raised mud platform where carved stones representing the images of their ancestors are placed. Sacrifices of fowls and pigs are made to them. Sometimes the Coorgs become possessed of the spirits of the dead and express all their desires when they are sumptuously fed and given drink. The spirits of ancestors are believed to hand over their locality and become angry now and then. A male ghost is called *Karana*, and a female one *Sodalachi* or *Karanchi*. [769 346 782 787]

It is a belief among the Coorgs that ghosts cause trouble, and females even more so. The *Sodalachis* are ever inclined to smite children with sickness and sometimes even the adult males and females of the house. In fact they are ever inclined to do harm. With a view to appease their wrath, rice, arrack, milk and other delicacies are offered on various occasions during the year to them. Once a month, a fowl or two are offered at the *Kaimatta* to please them. In such cases a member of the community becomes possessed. He then puts off his head dress and walks in front of the house in a state of trance. While in this condition, the members of the family appear before him to represent their grievances. He makes some incoherent utterances which are believed to be emanations from one of the ancestors who has not been propitiated with offerings. At once he is treated to meat and drink, and neighbours are allowed to come in and put questions to the possessed. These gifts are called *Karana Barang*. [769 782 787]

COORG TRIBES AND CASTES

- 796 The Coorgs perform another ceremony called ghost-mask (*karanakola*)
 769 with the object of finding out the particular wishes of the ghosts. It is
 787 performed every second or third year and occasionally also every year.
 For this, the services of a Malayali performer, a Panikkan or Benna, are
 requisitioned. At night he puts on, one after the other, five or more different
 costumes to represent the number of ancestors especially remembered at the
 time. Arrayed in these different costumes, he dances to the accompaniment
 of a drum beaten by his companions and behaves as if he were possessed by
 the Coorg ghosts. After each kola or mask, he leaves the house with a
 fowl, a coconut, fried rice and other eatables; and some arrack, and offers
 them in the courtyard to a particular ghost. Various questions are put to
 him by the members of the family and by the neighbours while he is in a
 state of trance. The food given him during the trance is called *Karana*
Barani. The masks having been finished, a pin especially fattened for the
 purpose is decapitated in front of the *Kaimatta* and then taken up to be
 given to the performer. The rest of the carcase and bodies of the fowls
 [534] decapitated are taken to the house. In the absence of a *Kaimatta*, the pig
 [782] offering takes place at the *Karanakotta*. Women also behave likewise;
 when possessed by an ancestral spirit. While thus affected, they roll on
 the ground, but they do not give utterance to oracular responses. Some-
 times sorcerers, Coorgs or aliens, are invited to exorcise the ghosts. With
 [785] the recitations of certain formulae in loud voices, they resort to flagellation.
 If it proves ineffectual, offerings are given.

Village Gods

- 776 Tradition has it that human sacrifices were offered in former times to
 782 secure the blessings of Grama Devatas, Mariamma, Durga, and Bhadrakali,
 who are supposed to protect the villages or nads from all evil influences.
 These deities have their annual feasts among the Coorgs, but they pay
 special attention to Ajappa, Kalias Ajappa, and Kuttamma in Kiggatnad,
 whose shrine is annually visited with gifts.

Every forest ground has its presiding deity to which an annual
 sacrifice of pork and cakes is offered. If it is not propitiated, the *Kadevaru*,
 the tending god, will withdraw his favour, and sickness and death among
 cattle will ensue. Besides, there are extensive forests called *Devarukadu*,
 which are untrodden by human foot and reserved for the abodes or hunting
 grounds of deified heroic ancestors.

Serpent Worship

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 825 Traces of serpent worship or tree worship are found in Coorg. The
Natas or spots on which cobras have finished their course of terrestrial life
 are the place of solemn ceremonies. To prevent any human being from
 setting foot on the hallowed spot, it is marked by a little stone enclosure.

COORG

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During the month of November, a lamp is lighted every evening to Natas, and coconuts are offered as oblations.

Pilgrimage

The Coorgs go on pilgrimages to Irjatre at the foot of Lakshmanathirtha fall in Kikkatnad after the Sivaratri in February or March, and on the Talai Kaveri Jatra to the source of the river Cauvery in October. Amongst the Jatra beyond their country, those visited by the Coorgs are four, Subramania on the northern frontier of Coorg in December, Baitur in Malabar, in February, and Nanjangud in Mysore which comes off in December. In exceptional cases they go to Benares.

Demon Worship

The Coorgs are demon worshippers because of the evil influences of certain malignant spirits, which can render their life more gloomy and wretched. The demons are called Kulis, who are believed to be capable of carrying away the souls of the dying members in a family. When any trouble arises in a house, and strange voices are believed to be heard in or near it, a Kanya (a Malabar astrologer) is consulted as to the cause of it, and he speaks of the influence of some Kuli who must have carried away the soul of somebody either in the house or in the neighbourhood. He suggests that a demon mask has to be performed for the liberation of the soul. It takes place once a year at Kutta, or at any other place once in two or three years.

The master of the house ties some money in a piece of cloth which is suspended from a rafter of the house as a pledge for the performance of the ceremony. Sometimes he ties his brass plate up there and eats his food on a plantain leaf as a vow. For the demon mask, either a Malayali magician or a true Ajjala Palya is sent for, and the ceremony is performed in the courtyard of the house owner. Demon masks are performed in the name of one or two of the five demons, Bhamundi, Kalluhutti, Panjurli, Gulika and Goreska. The details of the ceremony are the same as those described for the exorcism of the ancestral spirits. The food of the performer in trance is called Kuli Barani. The liberation of the soul is thus effected. The demon that has thus committed the theft begs to leave the soul free. In the event of his refusal, the performer throws a handful of rice on the member of the house standing near him, and thus transfers the spirit to him. The spirit alights on his back, when he falls in a swoon, and is soon carried away by others into the house. The final act of a demon mask is the decapitation of pigs in front of the so called kuzhikots or demon abode. It may be near to or far away from the house or village. Fowls are sacrificed upon it. One pig suffices for house affair, but several pigs are required when a whole village is involved. The heads are given to the performers, and the trunks supply the house or village diviner.

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COORG TRIBES AND CASTES

Festivals: (1) Huttari

243 The Huttari is the feast of first fruits. The name is said to be
 796 derived from the Malayalam 'pudiyari', or new rice. It occurs at full moon
 527 at the end of November or beginning of December. After various preliminary ceremonies, the person chosen to cut the first sheaves goes at sunset to the fields in procession with a lighted torch in a dish of rice carried before him. He has a sickle in one hand and a bamboo bottle of fresh milk in the other. He cuts the sheaf and distributes the stalk to those present, and puts some into the milk. This is carried in procession to the house, the people shouting, "Poli, poli, Deva", that is, "Increase, increase, O God," followed by a blast of the shrill Coorg brass horn. It is truly a national and thanksgiving feast entirely uninfluenced by Brahmanism. It lasts for seven days. It begins with village rejoicings and extends to Nad or district gatherings, and ends every day with the peculiar cane dance of the men and boys to the tune of the most melancholy and monotonous sound of horns, drums and songs. Other games vary the proceedings, but the most interesting part is always the champion fight in playful dance, which often ends in a general skirmish in which the canes are freely used.

(2) Kaylurtha

527 The Kaylurtha is the festival of arms celebrated by the youths and men of Coorg sometime in August. When the hard labours of ploughing, sowing, and transplanting of rice are over, a break in the monsoon spreads its bright light and sunny warmth over the hills and dales, forests and fields in Coorg, when a holiday is most welcome. The
 [727] Takka of the Grama calls some respectable men to accompany him to the astrologer's home. They ascertain the most propitious day for the celebration of the festival.

[411] On the morning of the joyous day, the whole armoury of the house is placed in the verandah, gun and spear, bow and arrow, sword and knife. Some of the young men sit down to burnish the familiar weapons. When this is done, they are carried to a room or central hall, where they are placed in a corner. When the auspicious moment arrives incense is burnt before the weapons, sandal paste is dotted on them in profusion, and a show offering, Nivedya, is offered to them and the idols. As soon as the festival is over, the whole house sits down to dinner. The men then proceed with their arms to the village green, uru-mandu, to spend the afternoon in shooting at a mark and in athletic sports. The following day is devoted to a hunt in the forest belonging to the village. This is followed by a great hunt of the whole Nadu. It is a repetition of the village hunt on a larger scale. Whatever game is obtained, the man who killed the animal receives a hind quarter and the head. The rest goes to the company. The Kaylurtha is the most glorious of all festivities to the young Coorgs.

COORG

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and the popular song of the Coorg mountaineer does full justice to this sentiment;

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(3) Bhagavathi Feast

The Bhagavathi feast has been introduced by the Tulu Brahmins. It takes place two months preceding the monsoon. It is connected with demoniacal possessions, and extends over nine days. Tantri Brahmins, Coorgs and Holeyas have their share in the feast, and votaries disport themselves in their orgies in as noisy a manner as the Ajjala Palyas. The chief object of the feast is the collection of votive offerings to Tantri Brahmins who are an object of dread to the Coorgs.

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(4) Devasthanas

The Coorg Devasthanas are rude village shrines of mud walls and thatched roof within a gloomy grove. The only ones deserving notice are those at Bhagamandala, Palur, Irupu and Omkareswara Devasthanas at Mercara, the latter of which is built in the same Moorish style as the Rajas' tombs.

346

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113

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CHAPTER X

COORG (Contd.)

241 THE principal occupation of the Coorgs is agriculture. Wet land cultivation predominates, but cultivation in dry and high lands is also made for the maintenance of large united families with numerous dependents. Agriculture is of a rude type and is similar to that prevailing in other parts of India. It is a system of rural economy formed at a remote period and transmitted for ages unchanged. Wedded to primitive modes of cultivation, the Coorg views with disapprobation any attempts at innovation. The industry of the people of the Highlands is confined exclusively to rice. The narrow valleys between the high grounds are very productive. The agricultural implements are of a rude type. And yet the yield has furnished an unfailing supply from ancient times both for consumption and for export to Malabar. Wherever practicable, the valleys have been formed into flat terraces for cultivation.

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[221] The agricultural year begins about the middle of April. With the onset of the first showers in April or May, the ploughing commences. On an auspicious day before sunrise, the house lamp, *Tali-akki-baleke* (dish-rice-lamp) which plays a conspicuous role on all festive occasions, is lighted in the inner verandah, the members of the family assemble and invoke the blessings of their ancestors and Kaveri Amma. The young men make obeisance to their parents and elders and drive a pair of bullocks to the paddy fields, where they turn the heads of them to the east. The landlord now offers coconuts and plantains, rice and milk to the presiding deity of his Ned and lifting up his hands to the rising sun, he invokes his blessings. The oxen are yoked and three furrows are ploughed, when he takes a clod, the granary, and offers his prayers to Siva to grant him an increase of one hundred times. From 6 to 10 in the morning the ploughing is continued in the fields and turned two or three times. Then the borders are trimmed, the channels are cleaned, and the little banks repaired to regulate water.

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[221] Regulated by the monsoon rain, the rice-transplanting takes place during July and August. The women covered with gorakas, which rest on the head and protect the whole body, pull out the plants from the nursery and tie them in small bundles which are collected in one spot. Meanwhile, the submerged fields are repeatedly ploughed and levelled, till the soil becomes as soft as treacle. All the members of the family standing in a line knee deep in the muddy fields begin the transplanting. The bundles are conveniently deposited in the field, and each man takes a handful of plants at a time into his left hand, and presses into the mud with great rapidity seven or eight

COORG

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Hunting and Fisking

The Coorgs have been skilful hunters, and still keep up their hunting habits. Their chief weapons were the gun and the big knife in addition to the small handy waist knife. They no longer use the bow and arrow, or the sling. The long matchlock gun has gone out of use, and the wealthier Coorgs are now equipped with English guns and rifles of the best kind. The big broad-bladed curved Coorg knife, *odikathi*, is a most formidable weapon in a hand-to-hand fight. The bulk of them hunt partly for sport, and partly to supplement their vegetable diet. Pigs are coursed with dogs, brought to bay, and killed with spears, which are short, heavy, and broad in the blade, or with ordinary fighting spears. Old boars fight fiercely, and hunters are sometimes wounded or killed. Most animals are trapped. When they go hunting in a party, they have dogs which are set on tracking. When they bark, and the hunters approach, the animal is disturbed. It tries to run away or charges them. In the latter case they aim at the animal with guns and kill it.

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In their spare moments the Coorgs fish in streams, rivers and tanks. They use nets. The ordinary one is the *thadusala* which is spread across the stream to prevent fish from escaping. At a distance of about a furlong, they spread another net so as to drive the fish within the net. When the nets are brought closer, many fish are caught by hand. They use also another net known as *beersala* by which they catch fish by shooting and throwing baits.

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Dietary

The Coorgs have an abundant variety of food materials. They eat pigs and goats. Their chief article of food is rice, and on festive occasions cakes and sweetmeats are prepared. Earthenware vessels are used. Their kitchens are remarkable for the cleanliness of their cooking vessels in use which are in charge of the cook. Like their Hindu sisters, the Coorg women attend on elderly members before they take meals. Before serving the meals, a little of the cooked food is offered to the family deity at the *Kanni-kombare*. They take an early breakfast of rice seasoned with curds and pickles. A substantial meal is taken at noon with rice and curry. At 3 p.m. *kanji* is again taken, and in the evening a hearty meal of boiled rice with vegetable and meat curry and other condiments. Toddy tapped from the bastard *sago* palm, arrack and a kind of beer made of fermented rice, brandy are the usual beverages. Of late European liquors have become common beverages at festivities.

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Coorg Hospitality

The Coorg women deserve much for their industry. They rise very early, clean the kitchen, and do all kinds of work. They bear the

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Tree Worship



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Hottari Festival

[Facing p. 64]

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993 guna in the year Pārthiva. This was written by Venkadasya Mallia Bomarsia at the time of Basawalinga Déva Rāja Vodea."

● [982] The legend is shortly this: "A merchant Malla Shetty of Yelusávirashíme vowed to build this tank. When it was finished, there was no water forthcoming. Animal sacrifices were suggested by the tank diggers and offered, but in vain. In this distress the goddess Ganga appeared and demanded the little finger of the Shetti. Unwilling to make this sacrifice, he offered the life of Akkony, his daughter-in-law instead, whose husband was away on a journey. Akkony agreed, took an affectionate leave of her child and parents, who were ignorant of her intentions, and amidst great solemnities she stepped into the tank, when Ganga made her appearance in rushing water. Akkony's parents, hearing of the impending sacrifice, hastened to rescue their daughter, but she refused to leave the tank, uttered a curse upon her father and mother-in-law and disappeared in the rising water. She then appeared in a dream to her husband, who speedily returned home, and, on hearing what had happened, killed his parents, and with his child in his arms rushed to the tank and in despair threw himself into it, when both were graciously received by Ganga."

312 Besides the small public tanks, there are only private wells, that yield, if dug deep enough, everywhere sweet and clear water; but it appears, that the natives of Coorg do not bestow enough attention on the great blessing of wholesome water, and are often satisfied with the muddy contents of a hole, carelessly dug by the side of their paddy-fields, though from their own experience they assert, that most of their diseases are owing to the bad quality of their drinking water.

137 *Forests and their general flora and fauna.*—In Coorg extensive forests clothe every mountain range almost up to the summit and bamboo jungles, cover the more level eastern districts,

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[825] plough and two labourers. On Monday he does not plough with bullocks, but buffaloes only, considering Monday as the day of the bullock's creation.

243 Whatever of cattle manure and dry leaves has been collected during the year is in the dry season carried by the women to the fields in large baskets and deposited in little heaps which are there burnt and the ashes are subsequently strewn over the ground. With the first showers in April and

[354] May the ploughing commences. On a propitious day before sunrise the house-lamp—Táli-akki-balake (dish-rice-lamp)—which plays a conspicuous roll on all festive occasions, is lighted in the inner verandah, the housepeople assemble and invoke their ancestors and Kávéri Amma for a blessing; the young men make obeisance to their parents and elders and then drive a pair of bullocks into the paddy-fields, where they turn the heads of the beasts towards the east. The land-

● [782] lord now offers cocoanuts and plantains, rice and milk to the presiding deity of his Nád, and lifting up his hands in adoration to the rising sun invokes a blessing. The oxen are yoked and three furrows ploughed, when the work is finished for that morning. Of the turned earth they take a clod home to the store-house or granary praying Shiva to grant them a hundred-fold increase. This recognition of the source of material wellbeing, is followed by personal industry that should command success.

From 6 to 10 in the morning the ploughing is continued till all the fields are turned over 2 or 3 times. Then the borders are trimmed, the channels cleaned and the little banks between the fields repaired, to regulate the water.

By the end of May one part of the fields which commands a permanent water supply and which has been well manured, is prepared for a nursery by repeated ploughing and harrowing, whilst the whole field is submerged. For every hundred butties of land from 2 to 2½ butties of grain are required for

lion mouthed shape, marked with purple-violet stripes in the centre. The numerous angular black seeds are closely packed in oval trivalvular capsules of a yellowish white colour and, if bruised, have a pungent aromatic taste. On this account and for their cordial, stimulant properties they are much in use as an agreeable spice and as a cough and vomiting allaying medicine. 249 [263] [757]

The capsules ripen in September or October, when the crop is gathered and being the first, is dedicated to the deity and called Déva-cottu (God's gift). A full harvest, however, is collected only in the fourth year and the plants may continue to yield a good crop for seven successive years, when on their decline they are reinvigorated by the felling of another tree on the top of them. According to the number of fruit-bearing racemes on one stem, which amount from one to four, the crop is estimated as a quarter, half, three quarters and a full crop. The perennial stem of the full grown plant is erect, jointed and from 6 to 9 feet high and enveloped in the sheaths of the 1 to 2 feet long lanceolate leaves. [782] •

The yearly gathering of the cardamoms is attended with much hardship, especially when the gardens are not in Umalca, i. e. hills near the úru or village, but far away in the Gademales. The high and sharp edged hill-grass is in October infested by innumerable leeches and poisonous snakes.

The cardamom gatherers, consisting of a party of Coorgs with their coolies of the Páleya, Kudiya, Yerava and Kuraba caste, (the Holeyas are not permitted to set their foot on those grounds) first set up a camp near the garden. A hut thatched with the long hill-grass is erected. At night a fire is kindled and the men sleep around it. Early in the morning they are at their work. One party clears the ground of weeds, the other cuts the fruit branches. Each man gathers a good load into his leafy basket formed of the Netti-mara and returns to the hut before sunset. [648] [415] [824]

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 cribed to the curses and witchcrafts of enemies. The dead
 are supposed to trouble the living and to demand sacrifices
 and other atonements. Many of the Coorgs, though they may
 despise their old superstitions and neglect their idols, come
 to believe in nothing but money. The cruel despotism of
 their Rajahs engendered dissimulation, falsehood and treachery,
 and lying and deception, bribery and conspiracy are now
 often enough practised to ruin an opponent and to advance
 self-interest. The name of the Coorgs is still feared by their
 neighbours, who look upon them as proud, irritable and re-
 vengeful men, and such popular estimations of the character
 of a neighbouring race are seldom without some foundation.
 It still may happen, that the head of a Coorg house on his
 dying bed will solemnly charge his sons to seek vengeance
 on his personal enemies, a bequest which occasions calamitous
 feuds between succeeding generations.

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 The Coorgs have hitherto been an unlettered people.
 The Rajahs, themselves without education, did nothing for
 the instruction of their subjects. Even the English Govern-
 ment has for many years hardly attempted systematically to
 raise them in intelligence and character. Only lately most
 praiseworthy efforts have been made to satisfy the awakened
 popular desire for education in Coorg, and the provisions
 made have already borne good fruit in supplying Government
 with a body of well trained officials, though education is still
 in its first stage of development.

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 The public morality of the Coorgs is controlled by a
 council of elders called "Takka-mukyasteru", who are the
 moral censors and managers of social affairs, without how-
 ever any magisterial power from Government. This institu-
 tion dates from the Rajahs' time and is hereditary in certain
 families. The authority of the village Takkas extends over
 offences against social customs, attendance at public feasts and
 proper conduct during the same, drunkenness and adultery.

one, who must hold this rope. A piece of wood, generally 796
of a creeper called Odi, is cut into seven parts, which are 526
called Chandu, i. e. balls. The man holding the rope puts
six of these balls in a circle round the peg at a distance of
the rope's length, the seventh is deposited close by the peg.
The whole company now endeavours to pick off the balls
without being touched by their guardian. The player in the
centre, always keeping the rope's end in one hand, turns
round and round, and tries to touch some one of the aggressors.
If he succeed, the person touched must take his place
and the play recommences. When six balls are abstracted,
the seventh must be moved to the distance of one foot from
the peg. When this also is lost, the man has to run through
the whole crowd and escape, without being caught, to the
Musicians' place. If he reach this asylum in safety, the play
is won and finished. If he be caught on his way, he is brought (824)
before the Nettle-man, an officer of the play-court, who has
been waiting all the time, a long Angare-stick—a large fierce
nettle—in his hand, for the victim. His hands and feet are 796
well touched and the play ends. Now the assembly perform 536
different kinds of plays and dances, representing the wars
which in ancient times appear to have been waged between
people of different districts. A man is wounded; a physician
is called, who prescribes for him. Another wounded man
dies, and Holeyas are called to invite his friends to the
funeral. A scene of demoniacal possession is acted. The 796
funeral is performed. Now stories are told of incredibilities. (538)
"I saw the other day a little hare attacking a tiger and break-
ing its neck." Reply: "Did you? I saw a buffaloe flying over
the mountains," etc. Three men invoke again Ayappa, Mahá-
déva and Bhagavati. Dances follow, accompanied by the (782)
beating of sticks keeping time with the music of the band (535)
outside. Feats of gymnastic strength and agility follow, and (526)
another invocation of the three deities concludes the per- (782)
formance.

open space before the temple, many of them possessed by devils of their own, which belong to the host of Pannangalamma, all of them jumping and dancing and beating their drums and gongs in the most approved fashion. Every one of them, man, woman and child, carries a long dry bamboo-stick. These bamboos are piled up in front of the temple, like soldiers' muskets, and set fire to at night, when the Holeyas dance round the flames until the pile breaks and falls to the ground. (If the pile fall towards the east, it is considered a lucky omen.) While these things take place outside, the temple-yard resounds with the voices of Coorgs, singing hymns in honor of Bhagavati, and the wild notes of many drums, through which the shrill words of the demoniac Coorg now and then pierce—a dismal scene! [786] [786] [787]

On the seventh day, after the morning circumambulation of the temple, votive offerings are brought by the villagers of the parish. In each village the people collect at the house of some one, who has vowed a bullock-load of rice or coconuts, and take their breakfast. After breakfast, the whole company proceeds with the offering to the temple, singing and making music. The gift having been presented to the priest, the party returns to the village, to carry another contribution to the temple in the same manner. Thus the forenoon is spent. Then the young men dance for some hours. Music heightens the joy of the entertainments, and all the rest of the community, women, girls, children and old men, sit round the temple-yard—admiring spectators. At four o'clock the idol is taken out and carried round the shrine, the whole assembly joining in the procession. The Brahman-carrier of Bhagavati is possessed by the goddess. He stretches out his hand during the strange dance, which he performs with the idol upon his head. Whoever can, puts some money into his open hand. He, conscious enough in this respect, casts every [786] [782] [535] [788] [787] [793]

796 piece given to him into a copper vessel, held by the Tantri.
 [782] With the setting sun the business of the day is concluded.

The morning of the eighth day is devoted to the delivery of votive presents, as on the preceding day. At ten o'clock
 [535] dances are performed by the young men, as on the seventh day. This continues till two o'clock, when all the good shots
 796 assemble for shooting at a mark. A cocoanut is hung up in
 526 some tree between two plantain-bunch-tops as a mark. He who hits the nut, is rewarded with a present of three annas and the honor of the name of a good marksman. Then one of the Takkaas, or the Coorg-dancer before Bhagavati, distributes a number of cocoanuts (of which there is an abundance, as every family must bring one or two) to the young men. One seizes a nut between his hands, others try to take it out of his grasp. In a few moments the whole ground is filled

796 with parties struggling for cocoanuts. He who succeeds in forcing the nut out of the hands of the original possessor, carries it away as his prize. At three o'clock the idol-procession takes place again, after which all the men go with the idol to the river or the tank, to bathe the goddess and themselves.

Ninth day. From each house one person appears at the temple, bearing the yearly money-contribution, which is delivered to the Takkaas. The collection being made, the salaries of the temple-officers and servants of the temple are paid.
 [794] Then the Brahmans give a good, undefiled dinner of pure vegetable dishes, to their Coorg supporters, first, of course, eating themselves, and leaving the rest to their friends. This temple dinner is the last act in the Bhagavati festival.

527 d. The Keilmūrta festival.

The Keilmūrta festival is a very different affair, altogether
 [787] a Coorg business. Early in the month of Leo (July—August) the Takka of the grāma calls some respectable men to

accompany him to the house of the astrologer. They enquire of the wise man, what will be the most propitious day for the celebration of the Keilmúrta. By the sage's answer the day of joy for the village-youth is fixed. The hard labours of ploughing, sowing and rice-transplanting are over, there is a lull in the monsoon, and now and then a most lovely day spreads its bright light and sunny warmth over the hills and valleys, forests and fields of Coorg. The people have long been at labour in their fields and houses: a holiday is now most welcome. On the morning of the joyous day, the whole armoury of the house is collected in the verandah, gun and spear, bow and arrow, sword and knife. Some of the young men sit down to burnish the familiar weapons. When this is done, they are carried to some room or to the centre-place, the Nadumane, and there placed in a corner. They wait now for the muhúrta, the propitious time, assigned by the astrologer. At the right moment incense is burned before the weapons, sandalwood-paste is dotted upon them in profusion, and a show-offering of rice and other food (nevédya) is made to them, as to idols. As soon as this ceremony is over, a mat is placed before the weapons, and the whole house sits down to dinner. After the meal, the men take their arms and proceed to the Urumandu (village-green) to spend the afternoon in shooting at a mark, and in athletic exercises. When the cocoanut has been hit, some of the company jump over a rope extended four or five feet from the ground. After this exercise, plantain-trees are fixed upon the ground, standing three deep. Now the strength of arms and the goodness of knives are tried. He who succeeds in cutting through three plantain-trees at one stroke, carries away the palm. Then round, heavy stones, placed on the Mandu for the purpose, are lifted and thrown, or put as in Scotland, over the head by such as are strong enough. The evening has now set in, and the company disperses. On the following morn-

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529 On the following morn-
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ing the youths assemble for a hunt in the forest, belonging to the village. Whatever game is brought down, is divided by the hunters in the following manner: the man who has killed the animal, receives a hind-quarter and the head, the rest belongs to the company. This day is followed by a great hunt of the whole Nádu, a repetition of the village-hunt, on a larger scale. The Keilmárta, to the taste of young Coorg, is the most glorious of all the festivals.

5. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AND POPULAR SUPERSTITION.

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The previous description of familiar and popular Coorg life would be incomplete without an account of other *religious observances*, if such a name may be given to the lowest degree of superstitions, which take the place of the worship of God among this rude race.

a. The sanctuaries of a Coorg community.

Instead of a general description, a short sketch of the village "Arméri" in Beppunád, the centre of Coorg life, may serve as a specimen.

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Arméri numbers only 25 Coorg houses, but is richly provided with idol shrines. First a Bhagavati temple in charge of Brahmans. In connection with this kind of worship there is a Mahádéva temple, and two Lingas in the jungle, which receive regular púja. Also two sanctuaries of Ayappa (the Shani, Saturn Pán? of Hindu mythology) have Brahmans for priests. Ayappa (Lord) is quite naturalized among the Coorgs. He is the great forest-god, a mighty hunter, to whom models in clay of dogs, horses and tigers are offered in abundance. In these observances the whole community joins under the superintendence of Brahmans. There are besides six places in which Chámundi or Raktéshvari (names for Párvati, Shiva's

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wife) is worshipped once a year, when pigs are sacrificed.—
This is, of course, an abomination to the Brahmans.

b. Ancestral and Demon worship.

The principal place in Coorg-idolatry is held by the worship of the dead. Every family offers a sacrifice to its departed ancestors once a year, during the two months preceding the monsoon. A fowl, generally a cock, is killed, upon a stone devoted to the Káranas, somewhere in the jungle-land belonging to the family estate. (Kárana is the name given to the heads of families whether living or dead.) Seven of the Arméri houses, however, have little temples where *Kóla* or *Bárani* is annually performed. *Kóla* is the name of a sacrifice connected with demoniacal dancing, *Bárani*, of a sacrifice to the dead without the dances. These temples consecrated to the worship of the dead are called *Keimada*. *Mada* is the Coorg word for *Matha*, a religious building. The meaning of the word "kei" may possibly stand for *Kárana*, or simply denote: near, at hand, private. The *Pájáris* (officiating priests) employed in these ceremonies are *Malayálas* long since naturalized in Coorg, *Panika*, *Maleya*, *Banna* men, subordinate to the *Kanyas*, the hereditary *Malayálam* astrologers of Coorg. At the *Kólas* they beat drums and sing verses in commemoration of the ancestors. Those who are to be possessed by the spirits, wear masks and buckle on swords. As they sing of the deceased father, or grandfather, or other ancestor, his spirit seizes them and they speak as his mouthpieces. To each spirit a sacrifice is offered, a cock and a bottle of spirits, which his representative drinks, thus fortifying himself for future exertion during the night. The ceremony begins after sunset, in the presence of the whole village-community, and is continued until morning. About seven or eight o'clock in the morning pigs are sacrificed. The head of one of the pigs belongs to the performers, the

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rest is cooked in the house, to which the Keimada is attached, and is consumed by the whole community with a plentiful addition of liquor. At noon the ceremonies are completed.

When Bárani only is performed, one of the strange priests does the whole work, but in the Kólas several are engaged.

A peculiar kind of illumination is essential to both Kóla and Bárani. Some plantain trees are split into thin strips. These are placed on the ground in three or four layers, crossing at right angles, and forming a kind of network. Twenty-four or forty-eight or ninety-six such strips of split plantain-stems are used. Where they cross one another, spikes of a reed, called Wotté, are driven through them into the ground. At the upper end of these spikes, which are two or three feet high, pieces of cloth are fastened, twisted into wicks and well moistened with oil. When the whole net is thus arranged, two layers of strips are raised, one to near the top of the spikes, the other a foot lower. Between the crossings, plantain-leaf-pieces are placed, upon which quantities of rice, plain and fried, of arecanut, jaggery, etc. are put. When the ceremony begins, a few of the oiled wicks are lighted. At the pig-sacrifice all are kindled, and the whole square blazes up like a table of fire, without however consuming the offerings placed on the leaves, which are the perquisite of the performers.

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Besides, every family has some spot on the estate, in a retired part of the jungle-land, where a sacrifice of a fowl is offered every year to the departed by the living members of the house. No strangers are permitted to attend on these occasions. A stone placed on a rough mound serves as altar.

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On the day of *Sivarátri* a religious ceremony takes place in Mercara at the Rajahs' tomb, that of Dodda-Virájender being transformed into a temple, where the spirit of the hero is worshipped with the honors due to the saint or rather a god, for Virájender has been deified by the Lingaites. On

the occasion a large concourse of people, chiefly Siváchárics, 769
collect round the tomb, to pay their respects; or, at any rate,
to participate in the liberal charity, dispensed at the time from
the Government Treasury.

The people of Coorg have also great faith in a certain
Kaliatanda Ponnappa or simply *Kaliat-Achchappa*, the spirit
of a Malayálam man, who came to Coorg, many generations
ago, was naturalized, married a Coorg-woman, and established
himself at Nálnád. He was a great magician, and long the
dread of the Coorgs. At last he was shot near the Cutchéri
of Nálnád taluq. Since his death his spirit has possessed 787
men, who give themselves to the strange arts that he practised.
A similar worship is still maintained in honor of Achanaik
in Chickamundru in Kiggatnád.

Higher even than *Kaliat-Achchappa*, in the estimation of 776
all Coorg, stands a certain female devil, at Kutta, called 782 •
Kuttadamma. Kutta lies at the borders of the Wynád. Kutta-
damma has no temple. The sanctuary is under a tree in the 778
forest. The Pújári is a young man, the only person left of 793
the family, which has engaged in this worship. Large sums
of money are annually sent thither by people from all parts
of Coorg. Many vows are paid to Kuttadamma in behalf of
sick people or of the dead. And whether a sick person recover
or die, the sum vowed for his recovery must be paid; or woe 793
to the living! Liberal presents are also given to the man in
charge of Kuttadamma, to engage her services against enemies,
who, they say, are distressed or destroyed altogether by the
demon, in answer to the prayers of her priest.

Each Báno (parcel of grass or forest-ground) has a presid-
ing divinity, to which an annual sacrifice of pork and cakes
is offered. If this sacrifice be not made, or not properly per- 825
formed, the *Káddearu* (the tending god, i. e. the god watching
over the cattle) will withdraw his favour, and sickness and
death among the cattle will ensue.

778 Besides the many groves set apart in each Nád for some object of worship, but chiefly for *Ayappa-dévaru*, there are some extensive forests, called *Dévara-kádu*, which are untrod- den by human foot and superstitiously reserved for the abodes or hunting grounds of deified heroic ancestors. These forests are: the *Iggudappa-dévara-kádu* in Pádinalknád, the *Chóma- male* in Katiednád and the *Iruli-báne* in Kuyingherinád.

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[791] Another annual sacrifice every house has to offer to a peculiar divinity called *Gulika*. This is an invisible constel- lation or star, belonging both to the order of planets and to that of the zodiacal stars (it is, as the people say, a son of Shani or Saturn). No mortal eye sees it. The astrologer only knows the *Gulika* and its power, especially over the sick. A stone is placed for the *Gulika* at the foot of some tree possessed of a milky juice. There the Coorg offers every year fowls, cocoanuts and a little brandy in a dish of plantain- leaves to his tutelary numem. In cases of frequent deaths in a family, a second *Gulika*, called *Mrityu-Gulika* (death- gulika) is worshipped.

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[753] Another object of solemn ceremonies are the *Nátas*, the spots on which cobra capellas have finished their course of terrestrial life. According to Coorg lore, the cobra capella ² lives a thousand years! When it has passed the meridian of its long life, its body begins to shrink and to brighten, till it shines like silver, and measures three feet or less at the age of six or seven hundred years. Still later, the reptile shines like gold, and is only one foot in length. At last it shrinks to the size of a finger. Then it will some day fly up high into the air, die and sink down upon the ground, where it disappears altogether. No man sees it, but, of course, the Kanya knows the important secret, which he will communi- cate for a consideration to the proprietor of the land. Should any human being, unawares, set foot upon the hallowed spot, incurable disease of the skin will break out upon his person, ² [Errata: This should read "Cobra di Capella." See Corrigenda, Cat. II, p. 493, -- Analyst]

and the poor wretch will rot away by degrees. To prevent such disasters, the Náta place is marked by a little stone enclosure. During the month of Scorpio (November—December) a lamp is lighted every evening to the Náta, and cocoanuts are offered as oblations.

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c. Astrology and Sorcery.

The ministers of Coorg superstition, the Kanyas, Panikas, Maleyas and Bannas make a handsome livelihood. The Kanyas find much work for the conjuring confraternity, dependent, in a great measure, upon their friendly patronage. The Kanya (astrologer) has complete mastery over the minds and, to a great extent, over the pockets of the credulous Coorgs. For a consideration in the shape of a purse of rupees, he writes the horoscope of the individuals who apply to him. Such is his cleverness, that he requires only to know the name of a person, in order to calculate the year, month, day and hour of his nativity. He is also the oracle of the Coorgs in cases of sorcery and witchcraft. It is believed by the Coorgs, that misfortunes, such as diseases of men or cattle, and deaths in the family or the herd, rarely come upon them in the natural order of things. The knowledge of an all-ruling Providence seems to have no place in their minds. Every severe affliction or great loss is ascribed to magic art or "an enemy hath done this." To find out the author of the mischief, and to induce or force him to keep the peace, is the only method that suggests itself to such people for obtaining deliverance from trouble. Application is made to some famous Kanya, who consults his books and caudies (little shells used for dice), and discovers the secret enemy's place, house, stature, age, etc. The man is called before a Pancháyat, and the case is discussed in the Parpatigára's Cutchéri. If things are not settled before this tribunal, the parties go to the Subadar, and frequently the quarrel is carried before the

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692 Superintendent, who has to get out of the difficulty as best he may. By the Pancháyat's self-constituted authority the wizard, or the person who has employed sorcery against his enemy, must promise to abstain in future; and in many cases reparation of some kind or other is made. In the days of the Rajahs such crimes were often punished with death. The British Government cannot, of course, follow the precedent. By a matter of fact order (No. 32 of 1858) from the Honorable Court of Directors to the Government of India: "Such an offence as sorcery ought not to be recognised by any British tribunal. If a pretended sorcerer is accused of really injurious practices against the person or property of any one, he shall be tried for these practices and if found guilty punished accordingly and not for sorcery. The pretended exercise of supernatural powers should be in itself an offence and should be punished as a form of Fraud."

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[796] d. Substitutes for human sacrifices and other peculiar rites.

As among other Dravidian mountain-tribes, so also in Coorg, tradition relates, that human sacrifices were offered in former times, to secure favour of their *Grāma-Dévatās*: *Māri-amma*, *Durga* and *Bhadra-Kālī*, the tutelary goddesses of the Sakti-line, who are supposed to protect the villages or *nāds* from all evil influences. In Kirindádu and Konigchéri-grāma in Katiednád, once in three years, in December and June, a human sacrifice used to be brought to Bhadra-Kālī and during the offering by the *Pánikas* the people exclaimed "Alamma!" (*Álu-amma* i.e. a man oh mother!) Once a devotee shouted: "Alallamma, ádu!" i.e. "not a man, oh mother, a goat," and since that time a he-goat without blemish has been sacrificed. Similarly in Bellár in Távaligberri-márnád of Kiggatnád-ta'uq once a year by turns from each house a man was sacrificed by cutting off his head at the temple; but

† [Errata: This should read "The favour".
see Corrigenda, Cat. 116, p. 473 -- Analysis]

when the turn came to a certain house, the devoted victim made his escape into the jungle. The villagers, after an unsuccessful search, returned to the temple and said to the *pújári*: "Kalak-ádu" which has a double meaning viz. "Kalake," next year—"ádu," we will give, or "ádu", a goat: and thenceforth only scape-goats were offered. The devotees fast during the day. The he-goat is killed in the afternoon, the blood sprinkled upon a stone, and the flesh eaten. At night the Panikas dressed in red and white striped cotton cloths and their faces covered with metal or bark masks perform their demoniacal dances.

In Mercara-táluq in Ippanivolavádi and in Kádakéri in Hálerinád the villagers sacrifice a *kóna* or male-buffalo instead of a man. Tied to a tree in a gloomy grove near the temple, the beast is killed by a Méda who cuts off its head with a large knife, but no Coorgs are present at the time. The blood is spilled on a stone under a tree and the flesh eaten by the Médas.

In connection with this sacrifice there are peculiar dances performed by the Coorgs around the temple: the *Kombáts* or *horn-dance*, each man wearing the horns of a spotted deer or stag on his head; the *Piláda* or *peacocks'-feather-dance*, the performers being ornamented with peacocks' feathers, and the *Chauráda* or *yák-tail-dance*, during which the dancers, keeping time, swing *yák* tails. These ornaments belong to the temple, where they are kept.

In some cases where a particular curse is said by the Kanya to rest upon a house, stable or field, which can only be removed by an extraordinary sacrifice, the ceremony performed seems to be another relic of human sacrifices. The Kanya sends for some of his fraternity, the Panikas or Bannas, and they set to work. A pit is dug in the middle room of the house, or in the yard, or the stable, or the field, as the occasion may require. Into this one of the magicians des-

782 cenda. He sits down in Hindu fashion, muttering mantras.
 789 Pieces of wood are laid across the pit, and covered with earth
 791 a foot or two deep. Upon this platform a fire of jack-wood
 178 is kindled, into which butter, sugar, different kinds of grain, etc.
 are thrown. This sacrifice continues all night, the Panika
 sacrificer above, and his immured colleague below, repeating
 their incantations all the while. In the morning the pit is
 opened, and the man returns to the light of day. These sa-
 crifices are called *Máranaka bali* or death-atonements. They
 cost from 10 to 15 Rupees. Instead of a human being, a
 cock is sometimes shut up in the pit and killed afterwards.

789 In cases of sore afflictions befalling a whole gráma or nád
 782 such as small-pox, cholera or cattle-disease, the ryots combine
 753 to appease the wrath of *Mári-amma* by collecting contributions
 of pigs, fowls, rice, cocoanuts, bread, and plantains from the
 different houses, and depositing them at the Mandu; whence
 they are carried in a procession with tomtoms. In one basket
 there is some rice and the members of each house on coming
 out bring a little rice in the hand and, waving it round the
 head, throw it into the basket with the belief that the dreaded
 evil will depart with the rice. At last the offerings are put
 down on the nád boundary, the animals are killed, their blood
 is offered on a stone, the rice and basket are left, and the rest
 of the provisions consumed by the persons composing the pro-
 cession. The people of the adjoining grámas or náds repeat the
 same ceremony and thus the epidemic is supposed to be banished
 from the country. In still greater calamities a flock of sheep
 is driven from nád to nád and at last expelled from the country.

788
 783 a. Pilgrimages of the Coorgs within and outside
 their own country.

Besides the annual *Tale-Kávéri* festival in October and
 the *Kuttadamma-játre* in April there is a large concourse of
 people in February during *Sivardtri* at *Herumalu* in Kiggat-

brother, Rāma immediately created a river, which up to the present day is called Lakshmanatirtha, but it was too late. Rāma afterwards desired to consecrate the spot and ordered Hanuman to bring a Linga from Kāsi (Benāres) within one hour and a half. During his absence Rāma, fearing that Hanuman would not be back in time, made a Linga himself of river-sand, in which operation he was surprised by Hanuman, who flew into a rage for having troubled himself in vain. He twisted his enormous tail round one of the neighbouring hills, *Hanumanbetta*, and attempted to upset it. Rāma, to comfort the furious monkey-god, assured him that Hanuman's Linga should become even more famous than his own. So the new Linga was set up at Hérumālu and the festive day of its worship precedes that of the Linga at Irpu!

In April and December there are jātres to the *Iggudippakundu* in Padināknād, where Tulu-Brahmins have a temple and receive the oblations of the Coorgs. It often happens, that a sick Coorg vows his weight in rice to that temple, and, no doubt, the heavier the man the more acceptable and effective the gift!

On the *Hottur hill* or *Kuntaka-betta* in Betiednād there is an annual jātre in honor of Isvara or Siva who has there a little stone-temple dedicated to him. In 1853 the dilapidated temple was rebuilt at the expense of the Takkas and headmen of Betiednād and their names are written on a stone slab in the temple, which is only 15 feet square, but substantially built with a Linga in front. It stands near the brink of the precipice which is about 500 feet deep and whence a beautiful view is obtained over Kiggatnād. There is also a remarkable stone on the very edge of the precipice about 2 feet broad and 5 feet long, where childless or unmarried people bring offerings of betel leaves, perform worship and turn three times round, believing that this ceremony will insure issue to the barren woman, or a suitable partner to the unmarried youth.

Kávéri and a great number of other Dévasthânas and fine forests dedicated to sylvan gods, this division is the most unenlightened and uncivilised in Coorg. There are many jungle-people especially the Kâdu-Marattias, who live on Kumari-cultivation (vide p. 108) and one tribe in the forests of Tâvunnâd, the Kâdavas or Bodavas, whose women dress in Eve's fashion, but with the vanity of Eve's daughters change the leaves four times a day. The women never come out of the forest, only the men show themselves, covered with a coarse cloth. They are excellent marksmen with bow and arrow, and live on the chase, seldom working for hire. Their huts, which they frequently change, are of the rudest description, made of sticks and covered with Netti-Pai (leaves of the Netti palm). Nearly the whole population of Tâvunnâd consists of Tulu-gaudas; there and in Nâlkanâd Canarese is scarcely understood, the people speak Codagu, Tulu and Malayâlam.

The ryots in Kuyinkéri-nâd, chiefly influenced by the wealthy House of the Karanika, Kutteti Eyappa, are mostly Coorgs and much devoted to the Pâlor deity (vide p. 174). But here as elsewhere in this taluq, the love of gain or, perhaps, necessity seems to overcome the superstitious scruples of the ryots; the venerated dévara-kâdas (sacred jungles) which, having for ages remained intact, are generally the finest forests, are cautiously invaded by the natives' axe and planted with coffee; but to propitiate the fabled wrath of Pâlorappa, Iggutappa, Maletâmbirappa and Ayappa, the devoted planter pays from 8 As. up to 1 Rs. per Batti of coffee towards the worship of the despoiled sylvan deities; but with the disappearance of these sacred forests, the oblation will probably cease too!

Padinâlknâd-taluq, being skirted by the highest range of the Western Ghats with the broad based Tatiandamol, at the foot of which the Nâlkanâd-palace is built, is watered by the upper course of the Kávéri with its numerous tributaries.

K
782 cause death, and in these cases only a slight cut is made,
K usually in the nose or ear of the animal, sufficient to
[755] draw a few drops of blood, which are smeared on the
tool, as already mentioned. In cases of epidemics,
blood is poured over the image of the deity supposed to
be responsible for the disease.

C
● 782 Coorg. The relic of human sacrifice described
776 above, in Mr. Ramakrishna Row's memorandum, would
serve to show that in Mysore such sacrifices, at one time,
formed a regular part of the worship of the village
deities; and this is confirmed by the account given in
the *Mysore and Coorg Manual* by Mr. Lewis Rice¹ of the
worship of the grāma-devatā in Coorg, which is a hill
country to the west of the Mysore State inhabited by a
mixed population consisting of aboriginal tribes, a
hundred and twenty thousand cultivators and artisans,
who were formerly serfs but are now freemen, and a
ruling class of Kodagas or Coorgs, who probably
migrated into the country about the third century A.D.
He writes:

C
771 "The essential features of the religion of the Coorgs
782 are anti-Brāhmanical, and consist of ancestral and
demon-worship. As among other Dravidian mountain
tribes, so also in Coorg, tradition relates that human
sacrifices were offered in former times to secure the
favour of their grāma-devatās, Mariamma, Durgā, and
Bhadra-Kālī,² the tutelary goddesses of the Śakti³ line,
who are supposed to protect the villages or Nāds from
all evil influences. In Kirindadu and Koniucheri-Grāma
in Katiyet Nād, once every three years, in December
and June, a human sacrifice used to be brought to
Bhadra-Kālī, and during the offering by the *panikas*
(a class of religious mendicants), the people exclaimed
'Al Amma!'—'A man, oh mother!'—but once a devotee
shouted 'Al All Amma, Adu!'—'Not a man, oh mother!
a goat'; and since that time a he-goat without blemish
has been sacrificed.

¹ Vol. iii, pp. 264, 265.

² Durgā and Bhadra-Kālī are names of Kālī, the wife of Siva.

³ See above, p. 29, n. 1.

WORSHIP IN THE CANARESE COUNTRY

87

has been sacrificed. Similarly in Bellur in Tavaligeri-Murnad of Kiggatnad taluq, once a year, by turns from each house, a man was sacrificed by cutting off his head at the temple; but when the turn came to a certain home, the devoted victim made his escape into the jungle. The villagers, after an unsuccessful search, returned to the temple, and said to the pūjārī 'Kalak Adu,' which has a double meaning, *vis.* Kalak, next year, Adu, we will give, or Adu, a goat, and thenceforth only scapegoats were offered. The devotees fast during the day. The he-goat is killed in the afternoon; the blood is sprinkled upon a stone, and the flesh eaten. At night the Panikas, dressed in red and white striped cotton cloths, and their faces covered with metal or bark masks, perform their demoniacal dances. In Mercara taluq in Ippanivolavade, and in Kadikeri in Halerinad, the villagers sacrifice a Kona or male buffalo instead of a man. Tied to a tree in a gloomy grove near the temple, the beast is killed by a Mēda (a wandering tribe, who are basket and mat makers), who cuts off its head with a large knife, but no Coorgs are present at the time. The blood is spilled on a stone under a tree, and the flesh eaten by the Mēdas. In connexion with this sacrifice there are peculiar dances performed by the Coorgs around the temple, the *kombata* or horn dance, each man wearing the horns of a spotted deer or stag on his head; the *pili-ata* or peacock's feather dance, the performers being ornamented with peacock's feathers, and the *chauri-ata* or yak-tail dance, during which the dancers, keeping time, swing yak-tails. These ornaments belong to the temple, where they are kept. 535

"In some cases where a particular curse, which can only be removed by an extraordinary sacrifice, is said by the Kaniya¹ to rest upon a house, stable, or field, the ceremony performed seems to be another relic of human sacrifices. The Kaniya sends for some 782 754

¹ The Kaniyas are religious mendicants, said to be descendants of a Malayali Brāhman and a low-caste woman.

782 of his fraternity, the Panikas or Bannus, and they set
754 to work. A pit is dug in the middle room of the house,
or in the yard or the stable, or the field, as the occasion
may require. Into this one of the magicians descends.
He sits down in Hindu fashion muttering mantrams.
Pieces of wood are laid across the pit, and covered with
earth a foot or two deep. Upon this platform a fire of
jack wood is kindled, into which butter, sugar, different
kinds of grain, etc., are thrown. This sacrifice continues
all night, the Panika sacrificer above, and his im-
mured colleague below, repeating their incantations
all the while. In the morning the pit is opened,
and the man returns to the light of day. These
sacrifices are called *maranada bali*, or death atone-
ments. They cost from ten to fifteen rupees. Instead
of a human being, a cock is sometimes shut up in the
pit and killed afterwards.

755 "In cases of sore affliction befalling a whole Grāma
782 or Nād (village), such as small-pox, cholera, or cattle
disease, the ryots combine to appease the wrath of
Mariamma by collecting contributions of pigs, fowls,
rice, cocoanuts, bread, and plantains from the different
houses, and depositing them at the *Mandu*: whence
they are carried in procession with tom-toms. In
one basket there is some rice, and the members of
each house on coming out bring a little rice in the
hand, and waving it round the head, throw it into
the basket, with the belief that the dreaded evil
will depart with the rice. At last the offerings are
put down on the Nād boundary, the animals are
killed, their blood is offered on a stone, the rice
and basket are left, and the rest of the provisions
are consumed by the persons composing the pro-
cession. The people of adjoining Grāmas or Nāds
repeat the same ceremony, and thus the epidemic is
supposed to be banished from the country. In still
greater calamities, a flock of sheep is driven from
Nād to Nād, and at last expelled from the country."